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See TURNING OUT A "TOMMY", by EDGAR WALLACE. Page 82.

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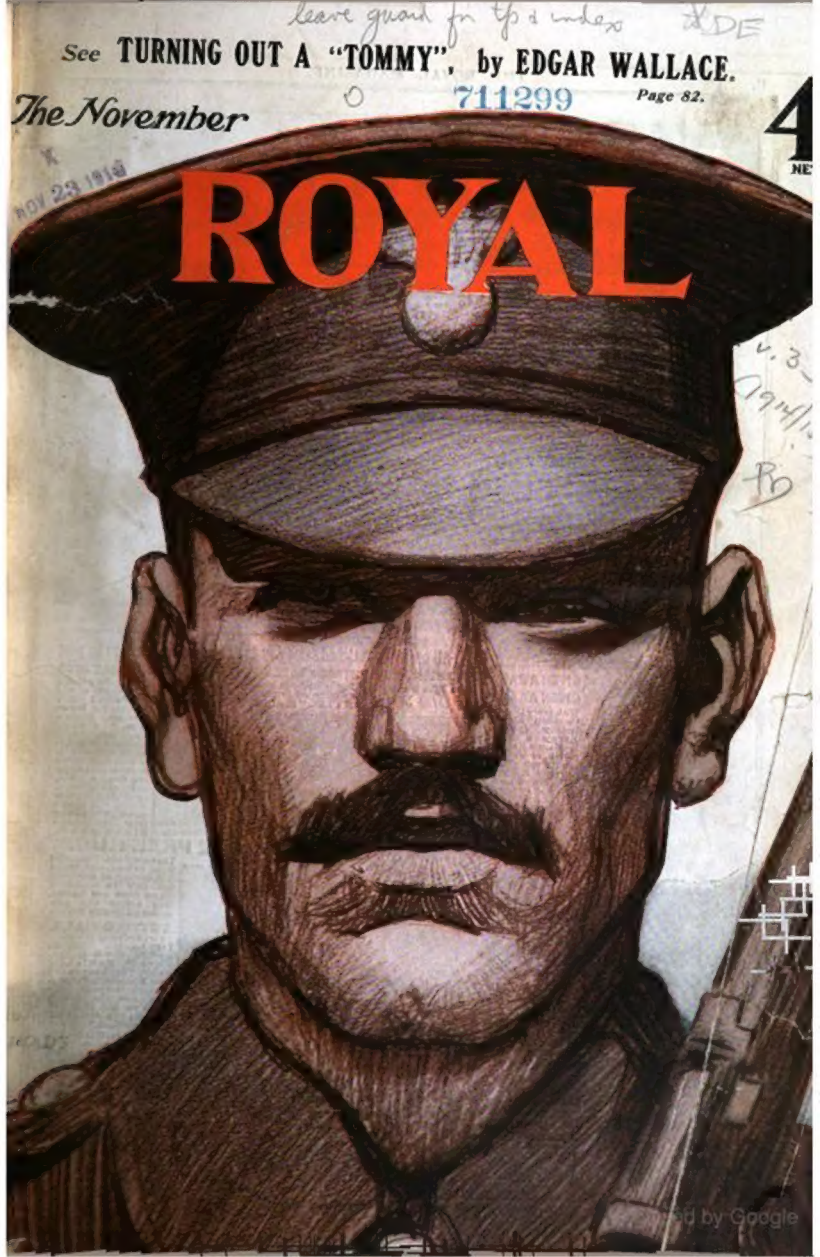

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THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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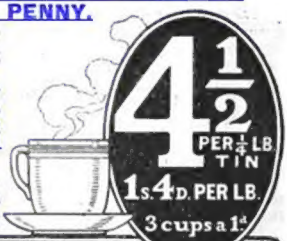

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Photo *J. V. Hassall.*

I know I'm much too small and young
For service at the war,
But there'll be a great deal more of me,
More of me,
More *like* me,
And we all know *where* we're growing up,
And what we're growing up *for!*

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Photo by E. Farrille, Paris. **"The Taking of a Flag."** *From a Painting by Raymond Desvarreux.*

A fierce encounter in which a gallant Cuirassier distinguished himself by capturing the enemy's flag, after a fierce hand-to-hand fight.

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The THRILL of BATTLE

FAMOUS PICTURES OF STIRRING WAR SCENES

By permission of the Illustrated London News. *From the Painting by R. Caton Woodville*

"Charging with the Cavalry."

History has repeated itself in the present war, for at the battle of St. Quentin a Highland regiment joined in the charges on the Germans made by the Scots Greys, just as the Highlanders did at Waterloo. The infantrymen rushed upon the enemy holding on to the stirrups of the Greys, and attacked hand to hand.

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From the Painting by Alphonse Lalauze.

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"Austerlitz."

The scene after the battle of Austerlitz in 1805, when the victorious French cavalry dashed along amid the plaudits of the enthusiastic infantry. It was in this battle that Napoleon inflicted a crushing defeat on the Russo-Austrian armies.

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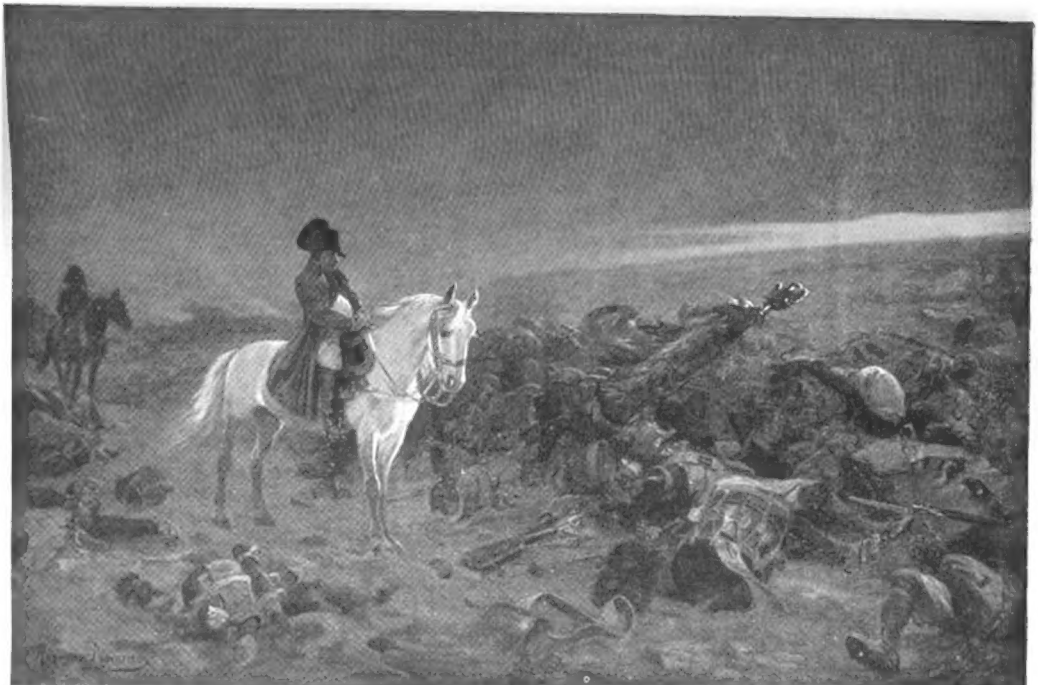

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"The Defenders of the Eagle."

From the Painting by Raymond Lecourtois.

In this picture the great Napoleon is depicted on his famous white charger, brooding over the battlefield, which is strewn with the dead forms of those who died in defending his standard.

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From the Painting by J. L. E. Meissonier.

"Napoleon III. at Solferino."

One of the most terrible battles of the century was that fought at Solferino in 1859. Napoleon III., whose troops inflicted a severe defeat on the Austrians, is here depicted watching operations with his staff.

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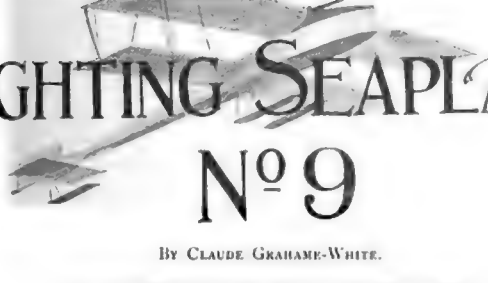
"The Surprise at Dawn"

This incident of the Franco-Prussian war shows a party of French soldiers surprised by the enemy's infantry, whose shots have already begun to take deadly effect. The bugler in the foreground is seen sounding the call to arms

By permission of J. Munro, Henley, publisher to the Queen, 4 Pall Mall, S.W. "God Bless You, Tommy Atkins." From the Painting by A. Caton Woodville.

Many deeds of heroism were performed in the campaign of 1890, when England interposed to shield India from the ferocious Afghan raids. Here is a British soldier rescuing an Indian comrade, and pursued by a horde of Afghans.



FIGHTING SEAPLANE No 9

By Claude Grahame-White.

"I have joyfully done much evil to those who wish me evil."

I.

Her crew was small, but what it lacked in numbers it made up for in spirit and in sheer enthusiasm. There was Herring, her pilot—or, as his friends called him, "the man at the wheel." Tall and fair, he had a sparkle in his eyes that even the most vicious of wind-gusts, smiting at him unawares, could not for more than a moment dim.

Then there was Grant, a proud man, and with reason, for was he not one of the first, and also one of the most expert, of those who had learnt to handle a machine-gun from an aeroplane's bow? Right out in front of seaplane 9, in a little cockpit of his own, sat Grant, and just before his seat, swivelling in all directions, was the trim and wicked gun—a gun that would cough out death with a rattle in its throat. Round-faced and chubby was Grant, with a cheerful laugh and a contented mind.

Not to be forgotten was Hetherington, the wireless man; rather a sober fellow he, in comparison with such optimists as Herring and Grant, but with a quiet sense of humour none the less, and an absorbing interest in the mechanism he controlled. In the centre of the seaplane's tapering hull, with the shadow of the upper plane above his head, Hetherington had his kingdom, and nobody, under pain of fearful penalties, must touch or meddle with his strange devices.

"How's the old bag of tricks this morning?" Grant would ask him, with a disrespectful but cheery grin.

And Hetherington would smile slowly, and glance up from his low seat amidships; then a moment later he would be engrossed again with his delicate machinery. Hetherington was a person of importance; it was he who, with the seaplane jumping and rolling in a squall, would tap out messages into the empty air and talk, as by a miracle, with some land station fifty miles away.

Finally, there was Bland—a simple, reserved man, whose main interest in life was the two motors, each developing its 120 horse-power, which he tended in a cramped little engine-room at the rear of the seaplane's hull, and with nothing between him and sheer space but the racing and whirling of the propeller. Did anyone in the Royal Naval Air Service know more about motors than Bland? It was unlikely. He had served an apprenticeship that was arduous and long; engines of many makes, and with queer internal ailments, had passed through his hands, and he had pulled them to pieces, and performed daring operations upon them, until there was no part of their mechanism with which he was not familiar. Bland would sit and listen to his big motors, as they revolved at 1000 or more turns a minute; and so sensitive was his ear that, should a valve be giving trouble or a cylinder missing fire, he was aware of the fact instantly, and able to locate the defect.

There came a hasty step, and the mess-room door was flung open wide. Commander Henson it was who hurried through, and his face lit up when he saw the aircraft's crew.

"You're wanted, you chaps," he said. "Every machine except Nine has left in the last hour for Harwich, but you're to patrol the Straits and report here by wireless. Fill her up with petrol as full as she'll go, and stay out as long as you can."

II.

It was a queer night, with a drizzle of rain and a wind that rose and fell in uneasy sighs, and here and there the moon filtered through and lit up a patch of sea. It was the sort of night upon which an aircraft, even heavily-built and fast in flight, would roll and swing awkwardly.

In the shadow of seaplane 9, working by the light of an acetylene flare, her crew of four were busy. There were many little things to be done, and not one of them must be forgotten; but soon her tanks were full, and Bland, after listening for a moment to the drone of the motors, declared they were all right and that she might be lowered down her slip. So along this slip-way, upon her polished floats, the aircraft moved, and took the dark water of the harbour with an easy grace.

"All aboard," said Herring, climbing to his wheel and levers in the bow, just behind the seat where Grant sat already with the gun.

Then Hetherington and Bland stepped from the slip to the aircraft—the former after a last word with the operator who, on duty at the station, would be waiting for messages from out of the night.

The motors spoke with a louder note, and the seaplane, throwing spray from her floats that flickered in the darkness, moved from the slip and was lost to view. Across the harbour she rushed, gathering speed; then Herring, drawing towards him his elevating lever, lifted the machine from the water into the air. She climbed quickly outwards, and the shore lights of Dover swept away astern.

"Patrol the Straits till dawn; that's the idea," called Herring to Grant, and the latter turned behind his wind-screen to reply:

"Right ho, old man! But it'll be dull unless we run across something worth seeing. What's the odds about a Zeppelin blundering up the neck of the Channel?"

"Sporting chance, I think," answered Herring.

Still outwards and upwards drove seaplane 9. Herring switched on the electric-light by which he could read his instruments, and saw their height was now 2000 feet. Dover lay behind—a smudge of lights; below and in front was a dark, empty void; the choppy wind of the Channel, striking the planes now here, now there, made the aircraft heel and labour as she was thrust forward by her motors.

Tap-tap! Crackle! Rap-tap-tap! Above the hum of the well-silenced engines could be heard Hetherington's wireless. Bending low within the hull, out of the wild rush of the wind, he was sending a test message through to Dover. A little table, mounted upon springs to deaden the vibration, was fixed before his seat, and upon it were his transmitting key and a pad of paper and a pencil. Just above him, throwing a ghostly white light upon his work, shone an electric lamp.

Next Hetherington, towards the stern, crouched the motionless figure of Bland, lost to all else save the care of his two engines, which were well warmed to their work and developing their power with a smooth rhythm.

Now Herring spun his rudder-wheel and the seaplane, banking heavily and diving under the influence of a sudden gust, sped down Channel in the direction of Folkestone. A rain-squall lashed at them, and Grant, out in the fore-front of the hull, cringed behind his screen.

The pilot glanced again at his dials. The altitude-metre registered 3000 feet, and they were driving ahead at seventy miles an hour—albeit with a sideway roll that, to any but an expert crew, would have appeared perilous.

Herring spun his steering-wheel and altered their course, and now they bored their way out towards mid-Channel. The wind seemed easier, but a mist was troublesome, lying in banks and patches, with moonlit spaces intervening, in and out of which the seaplane flitted.

Grant, who acted as observer when his gun was not required, tried to see what lay ahead—his eyes just above the level of his screen. But accurate observation, in such will-o'-the-wisp darkness, seemed impossible, and he turned presently to Herring.

"Confound this mist!" he cried. "It piles itself up in all sorts of funny shapes. Enough to give one the jumps, it is. If I were you, Herring, I'd——"

Grant never finished the sentence, because Herring, releasing one hand from his steering-wheel, seized his arm in a grip of steel, and swung him round so that he looked ahead again.

The seaplane had, in its swiftly flown course, shot out suddenly into a clear, moonlit sky. Above, faintly shining, were the stars; dead ahead of them lay another bank of mist, and from behind this screen, silently and deliberately, the bow of an airship was beginning to force its way!

The surprise was complete. Grant, seeing what Herring had seen, drew in his breath with a gasp, and for a fraction of a second the seaplane, driving on unchecked, devoured the distance that lay between her and the other craft. Then Herring woke to action.

"We'll climb," he shouted to Grant. "If I drive her up as steeply as she'll go, they may just miss seeing us from their fore-car."

Grant nodded his head, his eyes riveted upon the unwieldy monster which, its engines at half-speed, was uncovering itself slowly from the sheltering mist.

Obedient to Herring's tug upon the elevating lever, the bow of the seaplane leapt skyward with a jerk that threw Hetherington partly from his seat. Looking forward in surprise, he saw for the first time what the pilot and observer had seen. His mouth framed itself to a silent whistle; then he tapped Bland's arm.

But now Grant, peering sideways round the abruptly-rising bow, saw the fore-car of the airship clear itself from the mist, and so close were they to the leviathan, and so clear was this patch of moonlit sky that he could just distinguish the shapes of those who stood within the car.

"No good, old man," he called to Herring; "they're bound to see us."

And, even as he spoke, the matter was placed beyond doubt. There was a movement among the figures aboard the airship; then two spluttering jets of flame burst suddenly from her fore-car, and there sounded a hoarse rattle through the night air.

"That settles it," cried Herring, with grim quietness.

Grant swung round to him.

"German Zeppelin—certain!" he called. "Recognised us by the set of our planes, and opened fire without a by-your-leave. But she hasn't our range."

"And isn't likely to get it," answered Herring; "not just yet, anyhow."

With her engines at their maximum power the seaplane whirled up through the air, and in a moment or so, unscathed, they flew higher than the airship's hull, and out of range of the guns in her fore-car.

"They've a gun on their top platform, perhaps," said Grant warningly.

"All right, old man," answered Herring. "I haven't forgotten that, but before they can get a gunner to it we'll be out of sight in that mist ahead."

Up the seaplane rushed—at an angle Herring would not have dared in peace manœuvres; up and above the airship she thrust her way, and then sped like a shadow into the mist and was lost to view.

"What now?" called Grant.

"Chance of our lives, old man," answered Herring, a ring in his voice. "Get that pop-gun ready."

"She's ready—and waiting," came the reply.

"Right-ho!" said Herring, with a smile. "Then we'll try our lumbering friend with attack No. 1."

Grant nodded quickly and turned to his machine-gun, while Herring, leaning towards Hetherington, called to him the outlines of his plan. Hetherington voiced a quick assent; then he tapped an urgent message to Dover, telling of the airship they had sighted and of her firing upon them.

Herring meanwhile swung the seaplane round and followed in the wake of the airship, climbing rapidly.

Still ascending, till he knew he must be high above the airship's hull, he signalled to Bland to slow down his motors. As their speed dropped the seaplane ran again into clear air, and Grant, with his eyes turned anxiously downward, saw the long, grey shape of their enemy—like some gigantic pencil suspended in the sky—almost directly beneath them. He turned to Herring, but the pilot had seen the airship, too, and gave a quick nod of the head, signalling to Bland for full power.

The seaplane leapt ahead, still rising, and the airship, in a minute or so, lay astern and far below. Back from time to time glanced Herring, as though calculating the distance that lay between them and their foe; then suddenly, as though satisfied, he signalled Bland to shut off his motors, and, as the hum of power died away, he dived his craft seaward in a plunge so steep that it seemed almost vertical. Grant, throwing himself back in his seat and wedging his feet against the floor-boards, looked sheer down, through some 5000 feet of space, and saw the waves of the Channel heaving coldly under the light of the moon.

Down the aircraft planed, or rather fell, like a bird to its prey. Her engines were quiet, but the wind sang through her struts and wires, and now, even while she dived, she began to swing round—round until a half-circle had been made, and she faced the airship which flew beneath. The latter, still far astern and a long way below, had increased her speed and was pushing up her bow to rise; and she looked to Grant, who peered

Grant, behind his gun, threw a lot of lead into the centre of the airship's hull, ripping a gash in her outer sheathing, and breaking slender rods inside.

directly upon her, like a giant caterpillar which was raising its head to the sky.

Down, with a wail and a whistle of wind, dived the seaplane; as she plunged towards her bulky foe Herring still crouching tense at his levers—Grant swung clear his gun and sat wide-eyed and alert. Every second had its value; were they to do what they planned, each mind and hand must act with lightning speed.

But now, while Grant watched the airship across the shortening gap of moonlight, he distinguished a small railed platform upon the top of her hull; and upon this platform, his keen eyes told him, tiny shapes were busy round an object that reared itself skyward.

"Look out!" he called to Herring.

The gun was fired almost as he spoke, stabbing the night with its jets of whitey-red flame. But the seaplane sped on unhurt. Like a faint grey shadow she fell towards her foe, and no gunner who was human could have hoped to hit a target such as this. As she whirled down, disdaining the spluttering of the gun below, Herring leant forward in his driving-seat, measuring with his eye the space between the craft. Steeper for a moment or so he made the dive; then he steadied the seaplane a little in her plunge, and as he did so he called to Grant:

"Now, old man—lively!"

Grant, crouching behind his gun, lifted one hand in token that he heard, and in a second or so the work was done.

Checked in the steepness of her glide, but still sweeping swiftly forward, the seaplane bore directly upon her foe; Grant, instantly he could see below the airship's projecting bow, and so cover the cars which carried her machinery and crew, set his gun to work and pumped out a vicious stream of lead. Almost at the same moment that he opened his fire, the gunners in the fore-car of the airship, seeing their opponent clearly for the first time, set up a clattering din with two machine-guns and another and a heavier weapon which threw an explosive shell. So, for the space of a few heart-beats, both craft blazed at each other—a shattering, murderous fusillade.

But it was the seaplane's fire which first told its tale. Herring, peering over Grant's lowered shoulders, saw one of the forward propellers of the airship cease its twinkling, and collapse in a tangle of gear; and, even while he watched, the second of her two bow screws, fixed upon the opposite side of the hull, tore itself from its bearings, and hung by the car in a ruin of twisted tubes.

Herring smiled—a grim little smile. This havoc by Grant's gun was no surprise to him. Many times, in all its details, had such an attack been planned by the crew of seaplane 9. To concentrate at first upon the enemy's propellers and the gear that held them, had been the gunner's scheme of fire, seeking not so much to strike the actual blades, which might be riddled by shot without breaking, but to damage bearing rods and tubes, and so throw the screws from their mountings.

Next instant the smile was swept from Herring's face. There came a crash and a roar beneath the seaplane's keel; she swung suddenly sideways, and from some part of her structure sounded a ripping and rending of rods and stays. Further she lurched, as though reeling from a blow, and Herring had to throw his rudder hard round, with a movement that was instinctive, to prevent her from rolling right over upon her side.

So for another fraction of a second they seemed to hang, the airship's cars spouting flame at them; and then, diving and swerving, the seaplane swept down beneath her foe, and out of the range of her murderous guns.

Grant's voice was heard first. He bent anxiously over the side of the hull, then shouted back to Herring.

"They've hit one of our floats and broken something, I think, but that seems the worst of it."

"Right-ho!" called back Herring coolly. "She's quite controllable still, although she seems to want to fly like a crab. And now for round two. You did fine, old man."

"Thanks," said Grant simply, and bent again toward his gun.

Herring steadied his craft's dive, and brought her upon an even keel; then he signalled to Bland to start the engines, and directly the machine was under power again he wheeled her round and began to climb. Up leapt the seaplane, and regained the level of her foe, being now far in her rear. But as he rose Herring noticed that the airship was ascending, too

"She's trying to shake us off by getting rid of her water-ballast," he called to Grant. "But we'll finish the game before it's a question of altitude," he added.

Again Grant nodded, his eye upon the airship, which had reopened fire with her machine-guns, although the seaplane was obviously out of range. Herring, having risen to a sufficient height, swept wide in a sideway turn, and drove ahead till he flew level with his adversary. Then he threw over his rudder suddenly, and darted in upon her, his motors at their fullest power. Like a dragon-fly the seaplane whirled upon her bulky enemy; it was a swift blow and a desperate one, and relied for its success upon the sheer speed of its making.

Grant, behind his gun, threw a jet of lead into the centre of the airship's hull, ripping a gash in her outer sheathing and breaking slender rods inside. Here again he was putting theory into practice, and just as he had concentrated upon her propellers, so now did he pour his fire into one vital section of her hull.

On, like a pigmy fighting a giant, did the seaplane rush. As she came she met a broadside from the airship's guns. Shot ripped her planes and shrieked past the armoured bow of her hull, but still, like a thing of life, she sped relentlessly towards her foe. A shell burst above her with a crash, but the aim was faulty, and it did no more than make her plunge for a moment and falter in her flight. And to confuse the enemy's marksmen in their aim, Herring swerved the seaplane as she flew, now to one side and now to the other; then, following a succession of these quick lurches, he would hold her rock-steady for an instant, so that Grant might ply his gun.

But now, from one of the machine-guns upon the rear-car of the airship came a sudden rattle of shot among the petrol and oil-tanks above Bland's head. Instinctively, to see that none of the feed tubes to the motors had been severed, the engineer sprang to his feet, and as he did so Hetherington saw his body jerk convulsively and his hands grope towards the nearest stay.

They closed upon empty air, and, toppling sideways before Hetherington could reach him, Bland reeled against the framework of the hull, and stood thus for a second; then he pitched over backwards and fell sheer from sight—down through 3000 feet of space to meet death, were he not already dead, in the coldly-heaving waters of the Channel.

Hetherington sank back in his seat shaken by a shudder. This was war—aerial war.

Ahead of him, in the smother and splatter of the gun, bending tense at their posts, neither Herring nor Grant were conscious of the tragedy that had happened within three paces of them; and the two big motors, although robbed of their guardian, still sent out their hum of power. The tanks above them, being armoured, had resisted the penetration of the shot, and none of the feed tubes had been cut.

That the seaplane still flew was, in itself, a miracle. Guns roared at her, shot and shell shrieked and whistled past her, but on she came—the very swiftness of her onset and her erratic swings and darts from side to side proving her salvation. And while she bored her way in Grant was busy with his gun. Steadily he played his fire upon the enemy's hull, and now this concentration began to tell its tale. Two of her gas-containing balloonettes had burst and lost their contents, and the gash in her side was beginning to weaken the rigidity of her hull.

On, as though she meant to transfix the dirigible with her armoured bow, sped the seaplane; another second or so passed, with a fierce clamour of guns, and then, with an abrupt throwing forward of his elevating-lever, Herring dived his craft. Down she slid, like a silver-grey arrow, down so suddenly and steeply that she seemed to those on the airship to fall sheer from view, down, until she sped at 100 miles an hour beneath her enemy's keel.

But, even as he began thus to dive, Herring felt a jerk and a jar upon the wheel in his hands, and a moment or so later, when he sought to steady his craft from a sideway roll, he found that his balancing planes, away out at the tips of the main wings, were no longer operative.

"The control wires have been shot through," he told himself; then, as an afterthought, "I must steady her as well as I can with movements of the rudder."

He pushed the rudder over, but the seaplane responded sluggishly; she was nearly out of hand now, and yawed and veered as she flew. Herring set his teeth, and worked grimly at his controls; then, a moment later, his attention was distracted by a cry from Grant.

Just as they had dived beneath her, there had sounded an ominous grating and rending from the airship above, and now, as Grant and Herring flung a glance backward, her great length of hull began to kink and sag inwards towards the centre; she swung round helplessly and drifted into the wind; and then, as they watched her, she began to sink away seaward—stricken, helpless, and beyond control.

"Grant," cried Herring, "you're a dandy with that gun."

As he spoke, he jerked round his rudder with a sudden shout, and wheeled the crippled seaplane almost in her length, for out of a bank of mist just dead ahead of them, and driving ahead at full speed, came the long, grey hull of a second Zeppelin!

"Jove!" gasped Grant; and then Herring called again.

"We're not gluttons, are we?" he asked with another of his grim smiles; "we know when we've had enough, and one airship, for to-night, is about as much as we can manage."

So, limping through the air, but still flying gamely, seaplane 9 slid off into the mist and vanished on her way towards the English coast.

III.

Commander Henson it was who sighted her, just as she stole in towards the dawn. She was expected—eagerly awaited; for Hetherington's wireless had been at work and—albeit laconically and without verbiage—he had tapped the outline of the tale, doing so with difficulty, however, as his labours had to be divided between his transmitting key and the now untended motors.

Down the seaplane glided towards the motor-boat that awaited her; and those who watched her saw that she flew with a heavy list. Then, striking the water clumsily, owing to her damaged float, she turned half over and began to sink. But there were willing hands ready, and her crew were drawn to safety and quickly brought ashore.

The Commander met them on the slipway.

"Boys!" he said—all official reserve gone—"boys! It's first blood for us! I've heard from Harwich not ten minutes ago, and the best their machines have done during the night is to report the movements of one of the enemy's squadrons. First blood it is for us—first blood in the air!"

Herring nodded and shook hands, but his eyes were clouded.

"Poor old Bland!" was all he could say.

The dilemma of the unfortunate artist who is requested to make a "pretty" picture of mother's darling, touchingly illustrated by Mr. Weldon Halliday.

The Jobs one Jibs at, Feelingly Depicted by Leading Humorous Artists.

By Sidney Mattingly.

Life, as a profane and deep-thinking American once observed, is just one blanked job after another. So it is. Some of the jobs we almost enjoy, some we endure, but there are always one or two on which we lavish our choicest brand of hate.

My earliest aversion was, I am credibly informed, the job of being carried out for a constitutional by a nurse with flame-coloured hair, and I signalised my dislike by making it my business to remove large handfuls of her locks, with the result that she eventually had to be replaced by a more sober-hued domestic.

Ever since those hours of infancy, I can safely say that I have been haunted by a succession of jobs, trivial in themselves, but yet large enough to annoy and shadow my whole life. However bright and hopeful existence might seem, there has always been some little rift within the lute, some small insect in the ointment, as it were, to mar perfect enjoyment.

I pass over the annoyance of learning to brush one's hair regularly. This is a job all natural minded boys hate, but in time their spirit is broken, and they bend beneath the brush. I disregard such minor troubles as having to peruse Julius Cæsar's extremely egotistical account of his doings in Gaul, and the irritation caused by Euclid's idiotic puzzle-pictures—these are things of boyhood that with any luck the average man has forgotten all about before he is twenty-five.

I refer rather to the jobs that are thrust upon us owing to our absurd submissiveness to etiquette and politeness. Paying bills is a job few people profess to like, but paying calls is surely worse. It is, I believe, now rapidly going out of fashion and will soon be extinct, but as recently as last month I was staying with some delightful people at Tooting who actually, if you please, took me out to pay a round of calls for a treat. We started early, because Mrs. Z—— wanted to make a sort of field day of it. Her previous record was fifteen calls between three and five, and she ached to beat it.

We teed up, as it were, at 3 o'clock sharp, and reaching the first green without mishap, holed out at 3.5, and drove off again —in a taxi.

Mr. Starr Wood suggests digging in the sun as the height of human discomfort. The spade is apparently one of his own invention

We were bunkered at the third hole by a curate who had drunk so much tea that we had to wait for a second brew. At the fourth the tea was so bad that I gladly accepted the offer of a whisky and soda in the smoking-room

My recollections of the later portions of the match are hazy, but it finished on the eighteenth green —Mrs. Z's score was 54 cups of tea and a hundredweight of bread-and-butter, and was, I believe, easily a record for the Tooting course.

Paying calls is, happily, a job that can generally be avoided. There are others almost equally bad that cannot. A friend of mine has to pay frequent visits to a maiden aunt who, an amiable and no doubt estimable lady in other ways, is an inveterate fancier of guinea-pigs. She has, as a rule, some hundreds about the place, and she expects Smithers to brush and wash them, take them out for walks on the croquet lawn, and generally act as their guide, philosopher, and friend.

Smithers expects in the course of time to inherit his aunt's worldly wealth, including the guinea-pigs, but, unfortunately, he knows that she has made it a condition in her will that one of them, a special pet, a cream-coloured creature with purple spots and green eyes, is to sleep in his bedroom as long as it lives. Smithers, however, has confided to me that he does not think it will survive the shock of his aunt's death very long.

One of the most trying classes of jobs that afflict us in our daily life is that which drops out of a clear and apparently jobless sky. For example, some so-called friend on going for a holiday leaves you his dog to look after, or asks you to watch his house to see that no unauthorised person moves it into the next street in his absence, or requests you to tend his sweet peas or vegetable marrows.

A job that I got let in for in this way may I think be fairly described as exasperating. An acquaintance who is a hen-maniac — in other words, he has a poultry-farm—came

"Slow Torture"—Mr. Thomas Henry's comment on a task which is becoming more and more frequent.

down one day in a great state because he was called away for a week, at the very moment when he was about to start an incubator incubating. Would I be so very good as to look after it in his absence?

Stupidly enough, I said yes, and I saw the eggs—fifty of them—put in, the lamp lighted, and Herbert—that was his name—explained how I must look in twice a day to inspect the thermometer and fill up the lamp with paraffin when necessary. It was all exceedingly simple, and Herbert was to be back in a week to take the responsibility off my hands.

The morning after Herbert left, something went wrong. I must have turned the lamp up too high—anyhow, I arrived to find the eggs all hard-boiled. I was very vexed, for Herbert's sake, and not wishing to let him down, I purchased a further fifty eggs, put them in the machine, and being of a thrifty disposition that abhors waste, I took the original fifty home. I lived on hard-boiled eggs for a week, and had difficulty, I remember, in finishing them up before Herbert came back.

He thanked me warmly, both on his own behalf and that of the fifty chickens as yet unhatched, for the trouble I had taken, and I naturally did not think it necessary to tell him what had happened. It was thus somewhat of a shock to me when Herbert arrived at my house about a fortnight later positively crowing with rage. He held a newly-hatched chicken in each hand.

"What is the meaning of this?" he almost shrieked. "I put fifty priceless Grey Worpington ducks' eggs into the incubator, and they have hatched out chickens of the commonest farmyard breed."

That annoyed me, I admit. Herbert had kept me in the dark about having put ducks' eggs in the incubator, and I told him quite plainly that I did not like it. How could I be expected to hatch ducks for him when I imagined he wanted chickens?

The proposition was absurd, and I told Herbert plainly that it would be useless for him ever to ask me to do him another favour, on account of the underhand and deceitful way in which he had kept me in the dark.

And he has never done so, though I am sorry sometimes, for those ducks' eggs certainly had a most delicious flavour. It only shows how one's best efforts may be totally misunderstood.

"Making a Splash"—the reward of doing one's duty, feelingly depicted by Esmond.

"Where Women Score"—Mr. Alfred Leete portrays the daily agony undergone by every clean-shaven male.

WIGGY REMINISCENCES

There is no one who knows more about wigs and their wearers than the head of the firm of Clarkson. His profession has brought him into contact with many famous folks, and his experiences are as entertaining as they are varied.

By
WILLIE CLARKSON.

I MUST tell you that, as the house of Clarkson has been associated with the art of wig-making since the days of William IV., I simply cannot remember the time when wigs of every hue and shape, grinning masks and faces, and other accessories of the wig-making trade were not my companions both by day and night. I write "by night" for the simple reason that when stock was over-plentiful some of it invariably found its way into my bedroom.

It was largely, however, thanks to my father's friends and to tuition I received later in Paris, that by the time I had to start business on my own account, at the age of fifteen—owing to the death of my parents—I had mastered every branch and department of the perruquier's trade.

One of the first wigs I made, if not, indeed, actually the first, was for poor William Terriss. He was very particular about his wigs. Indeed, after that first one, he would never wear a wig which I had not made myself from beginning to end, and often he would come and see me do it.

I regard the wig I made for Madame Sarah Bernhardt when she appeared as Cleopatra in 1892 as my *chef-d'œuvre*.

À propos of the "Divine Sarah," as she is called all the world over, I can recall an amusing anecdote when she was once playing at the Adelphi in a piece called *L'Etrangère*, in which the name of the character she played was Mrs. Clarkson. As usual, I had supplied her wigs, and one of my men was down at the theatre at the matinée to see that all was well, and that nothing had been forgotten.

From his position near the wings he heard the great actress demanding in a loud and anxious voice to know where Clarkson was. She appeared to him to be very angry, and, fearing that something had gone wrong with her wig or that some mistake had occurred, he rushed back to me, running all the way, and arriving quite breathless and almost pale with fright, to inform me that Madame Bernhardt was in a towering rage, and was asking everywhere for me.

I immediately jumped into a cab, and went down to the theatre to ask what was the matter, but Madame Bernhardt informed me that, while she was always very pleased to see me, nothing whatever was wrong, and that it was Mr. Clarkson in the play to whom my man had heard her refer.

When Mr. Wilson Barrett was touring in South Africa some years ago I had a man travelling about with him to look after the wigs of the company. Just at that time I had had made a number of little copper medallions, which had the heads of the late

King and Queen Alexandra on one side and of myself on the other.

One morning Mr. Barrett's manager went out for a rickshaw ride, but when he reached his destination found, to his annoyance, that he had come out without any money. In one of his pockets, however, he happened to have one of my medallions, and this he handed nervously to the rickshaw boy, never expecting for a moment that he would accept it in payment.

To his surprise, the boy went off with it in great delight, and, next morning, and for many mornings afterwards, the theatre was besieged with rickshaw boys offering to take members of the company anywhere they liked if they would only present them with one of my medallions in payment.

To recall the old days when my father was carrying on the business to which I have succeeded, I remember a very funny mistake made by old Mr. Buckstone when he was playing the part of Chrysos in *Pygmalion and Galatea*. For this part we supplied him with a bald wig. He was also playing a part in the farce that preceded the piece, and he ordered us to make him a moustache for this.

On the day we sent him the moustache the wig was returned to us for some slight alteration, and when sending them to him that evening the moustache was pinned on to the wig to avoid all chance of its getting lost when the parcel was undone.

Next morning we had a furious letter from him in which he complained bitterly that the moustache had not been sent. After having vented his wrath, however, he added a postscript as a sort of sop to us in which he stated that he was much pleased with the alteration and addition to his wig!

It is not often that I am personally deceived by a wig, but I must confess to having been quite taken in by Miss Vesta Tilley. I have, of course, frequently seen her on the stage, and quite thought she wore her own hair then, and that it had been cut short like a man's. I asked her, one day, who made the hair she wore off the stage, and whether I might not have that pleasure. It came as a surprise to me when she told me that she wore on the stage a short-haired wig that I, myself, had made for her several years before.

Mistakes sometimes occur through the carelessness of dressers, or unusual hurry, when actors and actresses accidentally put on the wrong wig, but it does not often happen that they go on the stage without any wig at all, as I remember the late Mr. Fred Vokes doing on one occasion.

He was at Drury Lane at the time, and had to go on the stage riding an elephant which he mounted by means of a ladder. The wig he wore had to be altered in a hurry, and it was not ready until he was on the point of mounting his steed. It was sent across to him in the hands of a boy, who was told to climb up the ladder with it and fit it on while Mr. Vokes was on the elephant.

Unfortunately, as he was about to adjust it, Mr. Vokes' cue was given, and a prod from behind sent the elephant walking on to the stage, bearing its wigless burden.

Besides supplying wigs for theatrical people, I have made ever so many *toupées* for men who have bald spots to hide. At 7 a.m. on the morning of one Derby Day a few years ago, there came a vigorous knocking at my door, and I was informed that a gentleman wished to see me.

Not knowing who it was, and being by no means anxious to leave my bed so early, I refused to be disturbed. He called again at eight, and again at nine, so, thinking it must be something very urgent, I at last saw him. He was a gentleman who was in the habit of wearing a *toupée*.

The previous night when he had gone to bed he placed it upon his dressing-table, whence it had been dragged and torn to pieces by his dog in a fit of playfulness. He could not possibly go down with his party to the Derby, he explained, unless I could replace it with some makeshift for the time being, so I had to do the best I could for him.

Black eyes? I could almost write a chapter on black eyes, the painting out of which is quite a big department of my business. Once I had to go as far as Brussels on an errand of this kind.

The excuses given to account for the possession of black eyes are rarely original, imagination seldom soaring beyond a lamp-post or a mythical orange thrown by an equally mythical small boy, an excuse which hardly availed the gentleman who, having had an eye painted out in the morning, returned in the afternoon to have a similar office performed for his other eye.

Once, however, I received a "black eye" request which nearly shook me out of my professional calm. It was not to paint out a black eye, but to paint one IN. The gentleman who wanted this unusual service explained to me that he had had a "tiff" with his wife that morning. In her anger

No less a person than Madame Sarah Bernhardt showered compliments on Mr. Clarkson. This picture was painted to celebrate the occasion when, in a highly prized testimonial, she described him as "the Bonaparte of perruquiers and the Napoleon of costumiers."

she had struck him with her naughty, be-jewelled fist.

The blow had left no mark, but it had occurred to him that it might bring his wife to repentance if he went back wearing a black eye. So I painted in a particularly fine and large one for him, and away he went, quite pleased and happy. Whether the ruse succeeded I do not know.

Quite recently half-a-dozen young fellows of the medical student type called and were made up as navvies. It appeared afterwards that they had amused themselves by going to Piccadilly and opening up the road. What the Westminster City Council thought of the "joke" is best left to the imagination.

Mr. Clarkson's skill at disguising people is universal. This gentleman walked into his premises one morning, and—

One of our most successful make-ups was that of the Indians in one of the Military Tournaments, and the late King Edward once remarked on seeing them that he did not know we had any Indian soldiers over here. He expressed surprise when told they were English "Tommies" in disguise.

One of the most curious cases I have had to deal with occurred some years ago when, one morning, a closed brougham was driven up to my door, and a footman came in with an anonymous note, which requested that a man should be sent in the brougham to disguise a lady!

Nothing was said as to the lady's age or the nature of the disguise required, so I sent off one of my best men prepared for any and every emergency. He was driven to a lonely spot near Richmond, and requested to get out. Then he was given a cigar, and told that when a gentleman wearing a carnation in his buttonhole approached, he was to throw away the cigar as a signal.

Presently the mysterious stranger—a fine, handsome-looking man—arrived, and gave my assistant certain instructions, particularly impressing upon him that the greatest secrecy was to be observed, and that on no account was he to betray his identity. In accordance with his orders my assistant then proceeded to a certain hotel and asked to be shown to a certain room.

Arrived there he found a young and pretty lady, evidently in a high state of nervousness, who begged to be disguised as an old woman. This was done, and my assistant left. But for three or four months afterwards he was sent for once or twice a week in the same mysterious manner, and ordered to proceed to various hotels to disguise the young lady.

Eventually I discovered that the lady was an important ward in Chancery, who had been secretly married, and, of course, the handsome stranger was her husband. But I never heard whether the long arm of the law reached him.

A very strange request was that made to me by the King of the Maories when he was over here many years ago. The dusky monarch was fond of frequenting the theatre and going behind the scenes, and was greatly puzzled by the difference between the actors and actresses on and off the stage, until the mysteries of "make-up" were explained to him.

Some kind person must have mentioned my name to him, for a few days later the King called upon me, and explained that he was greatly annoyed by the attention excited by his dark skin and tattooed face when he took his walks abroad.

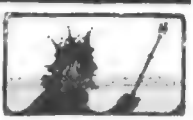
He asked me whether I could temporarily efface the dark skin and tattoo marks. Of course I could, and did. His Majesty was delighted, came again and again, and, when returning to New Zealand, bought a sufficient stock of grease paint, etc., to last for several years.

I remember that, after giving the order, he took me aside, and said that if any of his chiefs came and asked for paints, I was on no account to supply them.

I have been asked frequently whether, in a few minutes, I could disguise someone seen to enter my premises, in such a manner that when they left by the same exit they would almost certainly fail to be recognised. Well, I think the best answer to this question is actually to effect such a disguise and not to say that I could effect it. I ask readers of the ROYAL MAGAZINE, therefore, to study the two photographs shown on this page. The first was taken specially for this article at ten minutes to twelve only a few weeks ago, the second photograph was taken at noon precisely on the same

—ten minutes later walked out so disguised that the photographer who took both pictures did not recognise him.

This picture commemorates the great Dress-[illegible] when Mr. Clarkson had the honour of attending the late King Edward VII. when as Prince of Wales, went to the [illegible] permissible to reproduce his actual costume in [illegible] impatch was [illegible]



morning. Even the photographer who took [illegible]'s effects both photographs failed to penetrate this disguise.

The NIGHT That ENDED In a SONG.....

By E. A. Morphy.

The Indian Army has come forward in this present crisis with pride and joy to fight beside its British comrades against the common enemy. This thrilling story will give readers of the ROYAL an idea of what splendid stuff the Indian Army is made.—Ed R.M.

I.

"Hurrah!"

In the drunken joy of conquest Hickey forgot everything else. The ache of blighted love gnawed no longer; his wrath against Major Carden was passed. He only knew that the sangar on the hilltop was won, and that he was the first man over the breastwork.

He glanced about swiftly. The place was packed with dead. The last of the defenders lay with a cleft skull at his feet. Carden was not up yet.

A handful of Pathan sepoys took up his cheer as they vaulted over the parapet and splashed after him into the shambles. He wondered how many of them were left.

They had been fighting since dawn, *jezail* to rifle, *tulwar* to sword, tearing like tigers, tooth and nail, they had clawed their way up the mountain.

Hickey remembered his part of the business vaguely—in disjointed bits that were spasms of special excitement.

Two out of the four white officers were gone. Betham was the first to fall; then Murchison. Both had been killed within reach of his outstretched arm.

Captain Betham—light-hearted as a kitten, brave as a lion, swift as a deer—was racing ahead of all of them when he got knocked. He was hit clean between the eyes and tumbled backwards almost into Hickey's arms.

Betham was the only man to whom Hickey had personally confided the open secret of his love for Helen Woodgate, and the manner whereby Major Carden had destroyed all his hopes of happiness. This grievous wrong the Major had compassed by hinting to Helen's father the unromantic fact that officers of Pathan regiments on an unquiet frontier could best serve their country by abstaining from matrimonial entanglement until they became double company commanders.

And now they were at the top.

Again Hickey shouted "Hurrah!" Then, reeling forward, he tripped over the piled bodies of three Orakzais and fell flat on his face.

Recovering himself instantly he staggered to his knees, his sword upraised in defence.

"All right, old boy! Well done! Buck up! You're not hurt, I hope?"

Puffing but smiling beside him, stood Carden. A score of eager sepoys were busily probing among the enemy's dead in quest of possibly breathing survivors.

"You covered that last bit at a corking clip, youngster!" continued the Major. "Took the wind out of the lot of us. Are you hit?"

Hickey shook his head. Though Carden was virtually the author of his misery he was, nevertheless, his commanding officer, and Carden's praise of anybody was praise indeed. Therefore it was impossible to sulk with him.

"I'm not touched, Major," he panted. "Only puffed a bit over the last stretch. They were piling it into us a bit thick till we got them out of this."

Hickey had left the camp that morning yearning only to perish. The day before he had received from Helen the letter she had written, pleasantly and fondly and untruthfully withal, suggesting that he should be released from his engagement to her, and pointing out the reason why. Of course, she would wait for him for ever, but if commanding officers did not like to have subalterns with entanglements, well——!

Therefore, Hickey craved a quick and

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In the drunken joy of conquest Hickey forgot everything else. . . . He only knew that the sangar on the hilltop was won.

glorious death. It was inconceivable that love such as his could endure for the three or four years it would take him to achieve his double company. It would consume him utterly long before then. Moreover, this was India. Other and luckier fellows would be wooing Helen all the time. One of them would be certain to cut him out; and death was surely preferable to such misery.

Carden turned from the subaltern to his only surviving Subadar (native officer of superior rank), and looked over the scene of slaughter.

The last of the enemy had vanished among the trees that clothed the southern side of the slope to within thirty or forty yards of the sangâr (breastwork).

The sangar itself was on the absolute summit of the hill, and it was called the Eagle's Nest because it overlooked all the adjacent ridges and valleys. For that reason solely it was of vital importance as a picket post. An enemy perched there could snipe into every other ridge within rifle-shot and thus prevent any point being properly picketed.

The Major's orders had been to establish a picket on the Eagle's Nest. With a captain, two subalterns, and 180 native officers and men he had started on the mission. Forty-five of them, all told, had reached the crest.

"They fought well, Sahib!" said the Subadar, with an expressive wave of the hand at the bodies of the dead hillmen.

The lines on either side of Carden's mouth deepened.

"True, Jahan Khan!" said he, "and the day's work is not yet done!"

The Subadar carefully surveyed the valley, the rocks, and the sky. His gaze lingered on the wooded slope to his left whither the remnant of the force on the crest had fled before Hickey's ferocious onslaught.

"The work of the day is done, Sahib!" said he. "When a Pathan starts running you can see nothing but his back until the sun sets. Not until to-night will they press us again. But then, Sahib, I think it will be a real fight!"

Carden fully realised the weight of the Subadar's wisdom. On the crests below them and in the valley beyond the wood on their left, the masses of the enemy still clustered with their banners and their fanatical leaders, merely waiting for the darkness to conceal their advance before returning to overwhelm the scanty remnant of the detachment that had defeated them by day.

"You are right, Jahan Khan," agreed he. "Therefore we must stiffen our defences as best we can while we have light. Now that we have won this perch from them, we have got to stick to it."

II.

The men buckled to with a will, and reinforced, as adequately as the circumstances would allow, the rugged wall of the sangar. With fingers and bayonets they picked out loopholes, barely six inches above the level of the outer rocks, through which to fire into any crawling stalkers who might wriggle upon their stomachs or rush into the shelter of the breastwork, too low for rifle-fire to reach them from above. They also had to pile up the coping of the parapet with irregular lumps of rock so that the heads and shoulders of the defenders would not be silhouetted too conspicuously when they stood up to shoot.

Now and then a busy worker would peer out and cast a wistful glance at one particular cluster of dead comrades in the elbow of a spur far below, where the fight had been particularly fierce. There, in a chink between the rocks, with his big bare toes pointing to the sky, lay Malapa, the water-carrier, with a bullet in his brave old heart, and his heavy goatskin limp and emptied of every drop of water.

Neither Carden nor anybody else spoke a word about the matter, but Carden thanked his stars that his men were nearly all Pathans, well inured to thirst and its tortures.

Night fell. For hours no sound disturbed the silence of the eternal hills. At last, out of the shadows of the trees on the left front of the slope, a strong voice hailed the defenders, and called by name upon Subadar Jahan Khan. Jahan Khan was himself an Orakzai, and they were his kinsmen who now beseiged him. But your warrior of the Indian Frontier is accustomed to fighting his kinsmen all the days of his life, and it matters not whether he pots them from behind the shelter of his own nest among the crags, or from the front of a British firing-line.

"Ho, Jahan Khan!" called the voice. "Who were the kaffirs that slew thy father? Have they made a bondslave of the son—the kaffirs who slew thy father?"

The hillmen put much faith in the system of taunting those at whom they seek to shoot in the darkness. Their taunts are calculated to provoke the insulted one into betraying his precise whereabouts by firing at the spot

where he imagines the taunter to be. Then the snipers fire at the flash, and thus frequently bag a good soldier.

Twice the question rasped up from the woodland shadows, and each time—jeering from the darkness behind the voice—came a chorus of mocking laughter.

Indignant murmurs swelled from the soldiers in the sangar. The muzzles of rifles, ready bayonetted, poked out inquisitively from the breastwork. But nobody pressed a trigger.

Then, suddenly, a fringe of fire burst from the covering shadows of the wood. A chirruping hail of bullets swept over the sangar or splattered against the wall.

A shout, and the swift scampering of bare and light-shod feet, and a pack of at least a hundred Orakzais sprang from the wood and hurled themselves against the sangar.

Hot, frantic, panting, they tore up the slope.

Then, and not until then, the soldiers lay their cheeks to their rifles and fired.

A score of the rushing shadows dropped. The rest sped on—eager, undaunted in their fury.

Another volley crashed into them. The wads from the cartridges burnt the cotton clothes over the stricken stormers' chests. Some fell dead, others staggered on, gasping. Still others, though mortally wounded, continued the charge. Heedless of hurt, senseless to pain, exultantly murder-mad and hungering for death, they leapt to their doom—*ghazi*. With bleeding faces, throats, and chests, they flung themselves on the breastwork, screaming like devils in the darkness.

"Ho, Pathans! Well done!"

Through the rattle of musketry, the shouts of warning and command, and the piercing screams of the *Ghazis*, the voice of Carden sang out, deep and comforting:

"Ho, Pathans! Well done!"

Shrieking on the bayonet points, like impaled beetles, the foremost *Ghazis* squirmed. Swift to the parapet leapt Hickey and half-a-dozen of the soldiers. They hacked, clubbed, and stabbed at the oncomers, chest to chest.

The onset, weakened, wavered. The survivors—one and all horribly maimed—fell back. The men on the wall jumped outside to chivvy and disperse their repulsed assailants. Groans and curses gasped from the mingled warriors under their feet.

Bellowing like an ox, a young sepoy rushed out over the carpet of dead.

"What is thy name, O thief of the night, who fightest only with the mouth? Hast thou a name, or art thou a bastard-rat, who mocketh our Subadar Bahadur?"

No answer came from among the fallen or from the shadows of the trees.

The sharp voice of the Subadar himself yelped a command at the indignant sepoy, and the man dutifully fell back.

The rising moon shone on the sepoy's face and the sepoys chortled quietly, knowing him to be the Subadar's own son.

The moon now showed everything more distinctly. It still threw long, distracting shadows and made red blood look black as tar, but it clearly outlined thirty bodies between wood and sangar, most of them close to the wall.

Carden glanced around his beleaguered fortress and saw everything therein contained. His men had done well, but the onslaught had reduced his skimpy garrison. One stout sergeant and two sepoys were dead. A few others tended their hurts under the shelter of the breastwork.

"Close to the wall, men! Here they are again! Close up to the wall! Close up!"

A swarm of Orakzais, prone on their faces, were wriggling forward like snakes while their comrades in the rear sought to divert the attention of the soldiers by volleying furiously from the shelter of the trees.

The soldiers at the breastwork—marksmen all—aimed carefully and fired. Fresh howls and imprecations rent the night. But the horde of squirming stalkers—like rats in a swarm—advanced steadily to the attack. Two more volleys poured into them from the sangar. A score or more of the leading crawlers stiffened and were still. Another score writhed in the scalding torture of creatures shot lengthwise through the body—tipping from neck or shoulder, down through chest and stomach, or splitting the bones of arms or legs or back.

Again Hickey with a dozen of the Pathans jumped out over the parapet, and swept down upon the disordered tribesmen with the point.

When men with knives and men with bayonets meet, and shortarm fighting supervenes, there is no time for shouting. The game is too strenuous.

Grunting, yapping, groaning, the two forces clashed. A man with his jaw smashed by a shot hissed venomously as he sprang at the subaltern. It was his death-spring. He was mortally hurt, and nothing mattered to him as long as he could slay one enemy before

he died. Arms in the air, *tulwar* aloft, he leapt like a tiger, for death and the glory of Allah

A bayonet jabbed upwards and sideways by a sepoy on Hickey's left pierced, in one deft poke, the *Ghazi's* heart. His fingers opened convulsively. The liberated blade he had gripped sped forward, and, swishing through Hickey's guard, sliced along his cheek and temple.

It was only a graze, but it bled freely. Hickey continued to charge forward, looking like a man with a throat cut. The *Ghazi* lay writhing in his death throes. The Pathans plunged forward, racing for more men to slay.

"Come back!" shouted a voice from the sangar.

The men were near the shadow of the trees. The charge was repulsed. Hastily they rushed back to cover. Before they reached the sangar, however, a crackling volley broke from the wood. One of the sepoys fell. Two staggered. Picking up the fallen man and helping the other two wounded, the little band hurried over the breastwork, Hickey jumping in behind them.

Carden was sitting on a rock with his back to the breastwork in the spot Hickey had left him.

"You are hit!" said he calmly and without rising. "Is it a bad scratch?"

Hickey lifted his hand to his face, and gaped at the blood on his fingers.

"I didn't know it!" he laughed. "It's nothing! But, I say, are you hit, too, Major?"

Carden nodded affably.

"It's nothing, lad!" he answered. "Just pipped in the leg. Can't hop about much!"

For the first time Hickey felt physically uneasy – apprehensive. Was Carden gravely hurt?

He was given no time to nurse his apprehensions. The vigour of the Orakzais had not been diminished in the least.

"Here, Sahib!"

It was the voice of Jahan Khan anxiously calling.

A rattle of shots; a wild chorus of shouts exultant. On the extreme left front of the sangar, a devilish gang of stalkers sprang up from under the cover of the parapet, whither they had wormed their way, one by one, during the onslaughts. They tore the rocks from the top of the breastwork and cast them in the faces of the defenders.

Bayonets jabbed at them. Hot lead cut them down. Still, they fought like furies.

The front sepoys dropped their rifles and also seized the rocks, hurling them into the faces of the Orakzais. The great rough stones cracked bones like matches. Two sepoys lay senseless with their faces crushed.

Hickey felt frightfully tired and sleepy, but this new phase of the combat awakened him. He sprang into the middle of it. He stood on the parapet and fought off the men that snatched at the rocks from outside. He hacked at their hands and faces with his sword. The soldiers pelted their assailants and shot at them.

Three abreast in a row, the Orakzais made a brave leap to the parapet. Their followers hoisted them by the heels. Hickey stumbled and fell on top of the nearmost. He struck at the one beyond with his sword.

The man he fell upon turned like a cat and got his long wiry fingers around Hickey's neck. Hickey squeaked. The man suddenly relinquished his grip and slid back outwards. The Subadar had caught him by the head and shoulder and broken his neck.

The third man sprang to his knees and flourished a knife like a cutlass. He took a flying jump at the Subadar, stopped suddenly in mid-air, and dropped. A twenty pound rock had smashed his head. A bayonet upthrust ripped him open.

All along the face of the sangar the rifles blazed and the cold steel shone. Then everything suddenly slacked off a bit. Hickey, on the parapet, was hacking at the empty night. The Orakzais had again retired.

He clambered back into the sangar. He was insufferably tired. It was difficult to shout and impossible to wet his mouth with his tongue, but it was no use thinking of water.

He considered it frightfully unfair that so many of the fellows should have gone to sleep while he had to stay awake. Now look at that Jemadar (corporal). A Jemadar ought to stay awake anyhow.

Hickey stepped forward to rouse the man, who lay back comfortably with his legs extended. His body was propped up neatly, as though in an armchair, by two convenient lumps of rock.

Trust those Afridis to make themselves comfortable anywhere!

"Nay! Do not touch him, Sahib!" It was the voice of Jahan Khan. "He is dead this hour or more!"

Hickey staggered back to his proper senses.

"The Major Sahib would like to speak with thee," continued the old officer.

"Hearken to him gently, Sahib; he is a great soldier and a good man!"

It began to dawn upon Hickey that very serious things were going on, and that this was really for him, and all of them, the last night of the campaign.

Carden spoke softly and apparently with no effort save that of a very tired man.

"You hang on, old chap!" said he. "Hang on till daylight if you can. If you do that you'll win out. The Brigadier will send up the guns and these Johnnies won't wait for them. Stick to it till daylight and they'll send the relief."

Dazed, sobered, forgetful of thirst and hurt and weariness, Hickey took Carden by the hand.

"I say, Major," he blurted—speech-making was not his long suit—"I say, Major, you know I'll hang on while I can kick, and all that. Of course I will, but you're not so badly knocked! Buck up, er—er!"

Carden's hard face softened.

"That's all right, my boy!" said he. "I'm just hipped a bit, but I may snuff out if the works go wrong, and, anyhow, yours is now the responsibility. What I want to tell you is that these chaps of ours are as true to their salt as Sikhs. They'll stick by you till they're all dead. You hang out to the last!"

Hickey gulped. Here was a soldier. He had fancied that it was not "quite cricket" of him to spoil his chance of getting married to Helen Woodgate, but that mattered nothing any more. Only duty mattered. That was what a soldier had to remember. It was just as well he was not married or engaged to be married, and could play the game like the Major and bow pleasantly to Fate.

Carden closed his eyes and seemed to be laughing to himself.

"It will be worth your while to hang on, lad—if you can do it," said he in a half whisper. "And I hope you will!"

He paused a moment, then drew in a long breath and continued:

"If you win out of this, you'll get your double company and whatever else that may mean to you. You understand, my boy? Hang on!"

III.

A spluttering volley of *jezails* rattled up from the wood. Then a voice called gaily through the darkness.

"We have all fought heartily—we and ye!" called the voice, "and, my brothers, the night is old, and it is time for a little leisure. Is not that so?"

Jahan Khan chuckled in his beard as Hickey nodded to him to answer the merry Borderman.

"Ai! Ai brother!" he shouted. "That is truly so!"

The sepoys in the trench behind the breast-work sat up and listened eagerly.

"Then, brothers," came back the voice of the Borderman, "I shall sing you a song!"

Hoarse murmurs of approval rose from the soldiers.

The Subadar raised his hands to his mouth and answered the minstrel:

"Sing, Brother!" said he. "The Sahibs and the soldiers and I, Jahan Khan, send our salaams to thee, and would be greatly thankful for a song!"

Full and strong, on the hush of the night, weird and fanciful in its wild measures, the voice of the Borderman rose above the hills in a chant of love and war.

Silent as statues, enthralled with delight, the grizzled campaigners in the sangar listened, their bayonets fixed, their rifles ready on their knees. Their heads nodded to the melody, their lips whispered to the song. Bravely and boldly, the outlaw trilled it to the stars. Bar after bar, verse after verse, in measures that Hickey could not understand, but with unfaltering notes that he knew pertained to an unerring ear, the singer chanted his solo.

Hickey crept noiselessly to Carden's side.

"Do you hear it, Major?" he asked.

Carden nodded.

"Thank your stars, old chap!" said he, huskily. "Someone else must sing a song when he is done. He will expect one of us to sing one. By then, it will be day. Hang on, boy! Stick it out!"

In the shade of the wood, the voice of the invisible singer died away like a falling star. Hickey casting his eyes about anxiously, saw that the garrison of the sangar was reduced to Carden, himself, the Subadar and thirteen Pathans.

A sepoy hurried over to the Subadar, and the Subadar turned to Hickey.

"The men want somebody to sing!" he explained. "And I know somebody ought to sing, but our two singers are dead, and we all perish of thirst. I, Sahib, never was a singer. If only the Sahib could——?"

He paused on the suggestion.

Carden opened his eyes and looked up serenely.

"In ten minutes it will be dawn!" he warned Hickey. "Hold them for that ten minutes and you will win. They may snipe you again, but they will never make another charge after daylight. They know that, ten minutes after the dawn, the guns will have the range of the woods and start shelling them. Then they will have to bolt."

Hickey realised the situation.

"My mouth is like a lime-kiln," said he, "and I never had a voice. But I'll give them the only song I know, if they care to listen to it!"

Jahan Khan's eyes glistened with pride and joy. He had listed when Hickey's father commanded the regiment, and he had lived to see his first hero's son also a hero.

"Thou art thy father's son, Hickey Sahib!" said he. "Stand thou upon the breastwork, and sing to them so that they may see that thou canst not be afraid. They will hearken to thee until the day dawns."

Hickey's throat was dry as a desert, and he felt as though his voice had shrivelled in his chest, but he saw infinite splendour and rest and happiness in the vague possibilities of a song. There were lives to be saved. That was nothing: soldiers were food for powder! But there was a hill to hold, a position to save—the glory of it—the reward for duty well done—the——

Ineffable in the lure of its loveliness, the face of Helen Woodgate seemed to smile at him, beckoning, where the star of morning blazed low near the ridges of the far-off eastern sky.

What rondel could he sing for the love and glory of her? With what soldier's swan-song could he waken the heart of those slumbrous hills?

Alas! Hickey was no singer. For purposes of entertainment, on occasions of youthful revelry, he had wisely seen fit to memorise the words and melody of just one ballad.

It was not the song of all others that he would have wished to make immortal, but such as it was, he would sing it as best he could to his Pathans and his enemies by the light of the setting moon. Clambering bravely to the top of the parapet, he stood up, a fair mark for every sniper in the Orakzais' army, and began to sing.

In Dublin's fair city,
Where the girls are so pretty,
It was there that I first saw sweet Mollie Malone;
Through streets wide and narrow
She wheeled a wheelbarrow,
Singing cockles and mussels, alive, alive-oh!

A mutter of comprehensive approval rumbled up from the shadowy woods while Hickey chanted and re-chanted, as his own chorus, the ghostly peregrinations of Miss Malone, reiterating poignantly how:

Through streets wide and narrow
She rolls a wheelbarrow,
Singing cockles—and mussels—alive! alive-oh!

Hickey's voice cracked into a falsetto.

"The song is ended, oh, men of the Orakzai!" he screeched. Then he jumped again from his perch into the sangar.

Far away across the ranges, a faint flush streaked the sky. The smaller stars were fading. Hickey's heart leapt high. In those latitudes the dawn comes swiftly.

"It is time to start business again, oh Pathans!" called the mellow voice of the Orakzai singer. "But ere we begin I would speak words for the Sahib who sang to remember, if perchance he lives to do any remembering!"

Hickey nodded at the Subadar.

"Bid him speak on!" he wheezed. He could no longer shout, but every moment of delay was a lease of life from Heaven.

"Speak, O, my brother!" called Jahan Khan. "The Sahib hungers for thy message!"

"I am Kadi Sher, of the Rabia Khel, of the Ismailzai clan, of the Orakzai!" the singer called back proudly. "And anon, when this bickering is over, I shall find ye in Peshawar or Kohat or elsewhere among the regiments of the Pultan (British Army), and I shall become a soldier in your company. By Allah, O, my brother, yourselves and your sahibs know how to fight like men, but ye lack one such as myself, Kadi Sher, to teach ye something about singing!"

Yellow blazed the morning sky in the East. A perfunctory squitter of shots rattled up from the woods, but the long night was ended.

Down in the valley, Hickey could see through his glasses a column hurrying hot-foot towards the Eagle's Nest; the screw-guns were well to the fore. He would live. He would write to Helen Woodgate. Carden would write to her father again! He would——!

"They are coming! They are coming, old chap!" he whispered in the ear of the Major.

But Carden made no answer. He leant forward wearily, a smile on his face, his chin on his breast.

Clambering bravely to the top of the parapet, he stood up, a fair mark for every sniper in the Orakzais' army, and began to sing.

To all Readers of Magazines—An Appeal!

MAGAZINE READERS' 2/6 FUND

in aid of

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES' NATIONAL RELIEF FUND.

FOR GOOD OR EVIL, or partly for good and partly for evil, the names of us who have signed this appeal are familiar to readers of magazines; the names, also well known to you, of many others, our brethren in the craft of writing, might, we feel sure, have been added, if time had allowed of their sanction being obtained. Often—and in the case of some of us for more years than we care to reckon—it has been our privilege to try to interest you, thrill you, or amuse you. We and our fellow-writers have been the companions of your leisure, your resource in hours of ease, sometimes, perhaps, your diversion and solace in seasons of weariness, illness, or trouble. Without flattering ourselves, then, we may claim to have been, in some sense, your friends. And you have been good and faithful friends to us. You have found us dull and disappointing sometimes, no doubt; and you may have your special likes and dislikes for this and that man or woman among us. But on the whole there has grown up between you the readers and us the writers a familiarity and a friendship, not often openly expressed—opportunity for such expression seldom occurs—but, as we believe, very real and, we hope, strong enough to incline you to listen to us when we speak to you on a matter, not of diversion or amusement, but of high seriousness and of national obligation. We have always been in earnest about doing our best to deserve your approval. Even more earnestly we now beg you to respond to our appeal.

As probably all of you are aware, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has been pleased to establish a National Relief Fund, to meet the myriad cases of hardship and distress to which—despite the good-will of our citizens—the war gives rise. To supplement this Fund, we want you to raise a Magazine-Readers' Half-Crown Fund, and to this end our appeal is inserted in this magazine by the courtesy of its proprietors, and will appear (we hope) by a like courtesy in every

magazine published in the Kingdom. It rests with you, and each of you, by sending your Half-Crowns, to make the appeal a success and to enable us to offer, in your names, a splendid contribution to the Prince, who himself is serving the country so zealously as soldier and citizen.

Many of you, no doubt, have already given to the Prince's Fund, but many others—able perhaps to do only a little—will have found no opportunity that seemed apt for doing even what they can. Whether you have given or not, we ask you now to give us your Half-Crown. Half-a-Crown is not much to the well-to-do. To many of you, we know, it may be a good deal, but then the cause is one in which you are bound to give, freely and ungrudgingly, to the limit of your power, be it small or great. Half-a-Crown is not much in itself; but you number tens of thousands—aye, hundreds of thousands. And though we ask but one Half-Crown from each of you, we shall gladly receive as many as you can send. If the richer among you are giving a poor friend a magazine you have done with, why not pay his Half-Crown for him?

If we have been able at all to please you, it has been, thanks, in the main, to the gift of imagination.

You, too, have that gift. Give it play now, not on fictions, but on realities. Picture what your Half-Crowns will mean—the relief of suffering, the salvation of homes, the protection of honest self-respect, in many and many cases the rescue from ruin of all that a man or woman has worked for throughout a life of unresting labour and honourable thrift. Consider what your Half-Crown will mean to our soldiers and sailors—the knowledge that their dear ones will be cared for, that the Country for whom they are ready to give their lives is not unmindful of what must be as dear to them as life itself.

The trouble strikes far and deep; the need is great and urgent. But you, the Magazine Readers of the Kingdom and the Empire, are a mighty host. If you will, you can do much, and in your generous response to our appeal we shall see fresh proof of your friendly feelings towards us.

Your Half-Crowns should be sent to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, Buckingham Palace, London. Envelopes, which need not be stamped, should be marked *Magazine Reader.* Any queries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Magazine-Readers' Half-Crown Fund, Mr. Anthony Hope Hawkins, at 41 Bedford Square, London, W.C.

We are, Ladies and Gentlemen, your faithful and grateful servants:

(Signed)

J. M. Barrie.
Arnold Bennett.
Hall Caine.
G. K. Chesterton,
Marie Corelli.
Conan Doyle.
Charles Garvice.
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Mary A. Ward
(Mrs. Humphry Ward).
Marriott Watson.

How Can I Serve?

By Dorothy Rose.

This is the time when every woman worthy the name yearns to do something for her country, but into what channel to direct her energies is not always easy to decide. The following article contains suggestions and advice which should prove of the utmost value to the would-be helper.

In time of war every woman clamours for service; the home duties do not content her; she longs for a wider area. The spirit which changes a man from the defender of his household to the defender of his country, stirs also in the woman; she would, if she could, mother the entire army. It is difficult for her to realise the value of that indirect service which is as necessary to the country's welfare as are the more prominent schemes in which she would fain participate.

The woman who volunteers for service outside the home and neglects her husband and children is not a true patriot, though she may cut out acres of flannel and absorb first-aid information with the thoroughness of a human sponge

"Are there no vegetables to be had?" my dear?" asked a long-suffering husband as he dined off boiled mutton and bread for the third night in succession.

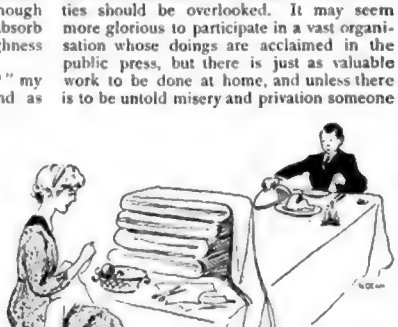
"Of course there are," retorted his wife from behind a barricade of grey flannel, "but I really have no time to cook nowadays. Considering our poor fellows are probably living on horseflesh I don't think you ought to quarrel with your food," she finished reprovingly, while her husband sighed for the tempting meal which after a strenuous day in the City he so sorely needed.

And it never occurred to the good lady that she was ministering to the needs of the troops at the expense of the one man whose well-being should have been her first consideration.

The same thing applies to the business girl. If she is fortunate enough to be at work she owes her first service, her finest endeavours, to her employers who are, perhaps, losing money in their efforts to avert the out-of-work peril.

The exodus of the men gives the business girl a chance to prove her mettle; she can fill up the gaps, she can "carry on," can hold positions until such time as the recruit may exchange khaki for the blameless serge of office life, and lay down the rifle in favour of the pen.

There is always a tendency lest in the glamour attaching to national schemes for relief and assistance the needs of local charities should be overlooked. It may seem more glorious to participate in a vast organisation whose doings are acclaimed in the public press, but there is just as valuable work to be done at home, and unless there is to be untold misery and privation someone



The wife who entrenches herself behind bales of flannel while her hard-working husband dines nightly off boiled mutton and bread is not a true patriot.

The girl who is a good linguist but a poor needlewoman had far better offer her services as interpreter than attempt to make garments for the troops.

has got to do it. It may be less gratifying to contrive warm garments for poor children out of unpromising oddments than to spread oneself on shirts and scarlet bed-jackets for the wounded, but a wardrobe full of shirts will not atone to our soldiers for the fact that their little ones went ill-clad in our midst.

Another point to be borne in mind by all would-be helpers is the necessity of using their qualifications to the best advantage. As an example of misplaced energy the case of a bright but undomesticated young journalist of my acquaintance whom I found almost in tears over the intricacies of a Bracknell shirt would be hard to beat.

"I don't know what it *will* be when I've finished it," she wailed, "but it certainly won't be a shirt," and she held up a shapeless garment into which no man of average size could possibly have inserted himself, or, having done so, could have been extricated without the aid of dynamite.

"Whatever induced you to attempt it?" I asked, for my friend was not usually on speaking terms with a needle.

"I *had* to do something to help," she wailed, "and everyone else is making shirts, and so——"

"You fell into line," I finished. "And it never struck you that while you are a very poor needlewoman you are a remarkably good linguist; that you can speak Flemish upside down, and that the authorities are at their wits' end for interpreters who can deal with the Belgian refugees."

My friend no longer mutilates flannel, but she does yeoman service as an interpreter on very many occasions.

Those who have soldiers camping or billeted in the neighbourhood will find plenty of scope. Neither tents nor the barns or garages, in which many may have to sleep, are very commodious or home-like. The women of the district might well turn their attention to providing some refuge where the men can write letters, read and smoke in comfort, and talk to any relatives or friends who may visit them.

One very kindly thought was that of a lady who offered the use of her bathroom to any officer who cared to present his card. A tradesman in the same district threw open

Many housewives might give a "khaki tea-party" to soldiers camping in the neighbourhood; the glimpse of home life would be much appreciated.

his orchard one sultry afternoon and invited passing soldiers to tea and bread-and-butter under the trees. A Boy Scout acted as decoy, and when the cups gave out, the late arrivals light-heartedly annexed the first empty one and presented it to be filled without the ceremony of washing.

Garden parties are out of the question now, but there is no reason why any housewife with a good-sized dining-room and a reasonable amount of crockery should not give a "khaki tea-party" of this kind. The cost need be but small, and the glimpse of home life will be much appreciated. Those who have billhard tables might offer the use of them either to officers or men, and so contrive to make their few hours off duty as pleasant as possible.

Those who are without a supply of "Tommies" to be mothered and catered for can yet find many outlets for their energy. Service rendered to an individual is always more satisfactory than that rendered to an organisation; there is a personal element in it which is of necessity lacking in a scheme where the benefactor never comes in actual contact with the persons benefited.

"I wish I had a soldier of my own to send socks and cigarettes and things to," I overheard a girl say the other day. "It would be so much more interesting than sending them indefinitely for the use of anyone who wears khaki."

We can't all have soldiers of our own, but it ought not to be difficult to find a soldier's or civilian's family fallen on hard times, and if every woman with a reasonable amount of leisure took one such household under her wing, our men would have little need to add monetary worries to the many hardships they are forced to endure on the battlefield.

It is on the woman's shoulders chiefly that there rests the responsibility of deciding to what extent the war is to be allowed to enter into the lives of the children. Every mother should see that they take an intelligent interest in what is happening, and that they understand as far as possible to what end the Allies are fighting. But the need for restraint when discussing war news before the little people is a pressing one; lurid details should be suppressed, and the tendency to overdo war in games and conversation should be discouraged.

The danger of overdoing war and the war spirit, so that her work suffers, is a very real one to the girl breadwinner. The girl who devours papers in the intervals of working, and criticises the War Office in strident tones when her colleagues are endeavouring to work, may be displaying a laudable interest in her country's welfare, but she is also displaying a lack of conscientiousness to her employer.

Every woman owes it to her country to be economical nowadays, but a certain amount of discretion is absolutely necessary. This is not the time for lavish entertainment, but there is no harm in enjoying any simple pleasures which come one's way, and incidentally helping to keep people who minister to our entertainment profitably at work.

It is the duty of everyone to keep as fit as possible, and the girl who goes ill-shod or neglects her health for the sake of saving a few shillings runs the risk of becoming a burden where she meant to be a help.

"I was going to buy a new pair of boots this winter," remarked a little friend of mine whom I found flattening her pretty nose against the window of a big boot shop, "but I think I'll rub along with my old ones—that'll be 10s. 6d. saved anyway."

The business girl who devours papers when she should be working displays a lack of conscientiousness to her employer.

The 10s. 6d. has now gone, being spent on cough mixture and other fearsome draughts, but the cold she caught through getting wet feet has not—and new boots have got to be bought in addition.

Let us cut down luxuries by all means, but let us preserve sufficient sanity to distinguish between expenditure that is purely superfluous and that which is a wise and justifiable outlay.

A STORY IN WHICH LADY HILDA SCORES ANOTHER TRIUMPH.

ROGUES AND VAGABONDS

By F. E. Baily.

Lady Hilda is as warm-hearted as she is beautiful, and handles the love affairs of others with consummate skill. Whether smoothing the path of an old school friend, or facing death with the man who loves her, she is always delightful and undaunted.

I.

"Oh, Rudolf, I *am* hungry!"

She lay full length on the roadside turf, tall, dark, and beautiful even in the weather-beaten tweed and way-worn brown shooting-boots which clothed her—Hilda Glaive, the world-famous dancer, once Lady Hilda Risborough, and at present a happy tramp.

Rudolf Merion, the war correspondent, squatting close to her, laughed, and fished out the only remaining slab of milk-chocolate from the pocket of his dilapidated Norfolk jacket.

"Catch!" he said, tossing the sweetmeat across.

She caught it eagerly and hesitated.

"Isn't there any more?"

"Oh, lots," he replied, adding, to himself, "in the shops," and, her conscience at rest, she wolfed it eagerly.

The warm sun of early summer slanted westwards: all round them beat softly the green heart of peerless Sussex. It was the fifth day of a suddenly projected walking tour, and soon they would cover the remaining half mile to the little town and put up for the night at separate small inns, continuing next day in a spirit of perfect comradeship. Rudolf, hopelessly in love, would smoke a pipe before turning in, to the accompaniment of bitter-sweet musings. Possibly Hilda might toss half impatiently on her pillow before drifting into the deep sleep of the healthily tired, because she could not bring herself to link her life with his.

Down the hill they had left behind plunged suddenly an unkempt, vividly yellow van drawn by two demented horses. An elderly man, wedged high up in front of it on a projecting seat, flung all his weight and strength against them, the straining reins twisted round his gnarled, brown hands, with no result. Less than a quarter-of-a-mile ahead of him, with no friendly rise in between, loomed a sharp corner he would never negotiate in safety.

"Wonderfully like the Greek artillery going into action before Janina," murmured Rudolf, and got up without perceptible haste.

He measured the distance between him and the horses with a wary eye, and started running in the same direction. As they drew level he flung himself at the near beast, gripped the collar, and swung on to its back. His extra strength told, and managing to wrench the heads of the runaways a little to one side, he stopped them a few yards before the dangerous bend. In another second he

was at their heads, soothing them with voice and hand.

The elderly man on the dickey looped his reins carefully over his whip-socket, and descended, mopping his forehead.

"I'm Peter Hunt," he began, pointing to the van's lettering, which told of its incorporation among Hunt's All Star Aggregation of Talent, the Finest Circus on the Road. "I reckon it was a bit of luck for me you done what you did. I'm darned grateful, sir, I can tell you. I could never 'a' stopped 'em myself. That there chestnut's a youngster; he took fright at a pheasant getting up out of the wood."

"That's all right," replied Rudolf, smoothing the youngster's velvety nose. Glancing hillwards past the yellow van, he made out the line of battered caravans and dirty-fine vehicles which composed Hunt's All Star Aggregation. Clearly the finest circus on the road had fallen on evil days.

He felt a touch on his arm and looked round into Hilda's shining eyes.

"Well done!" she murmured, and Rudolf actually blushed.

Peter Hunt agitated his battered headgear and greeted the lady, pouring out a pæan of praise in Rudolf's honour.

"I couldn't afford no smash-ups just now," he ended sorrowfully. "The show business ain't what it was. Them there pictures takes all the money. We used to travel five elephants, and the procession was a quarter of a mile long. Now we ain't got but one lion, and no procession at all. This 'ere's the lion cage."

He jerked a finger at the yellow van, and fell to stroking a straggling beard sorrowfully. His blue eyes gazed at the two strangers in a species of dignified despair. His simple frankness won Hilda's heart on the spot. A wild idea came to her.

"You want a new, startling feature—something to hit the public fancy and fill the circus," she asserted firmly.

Peter Hunt looked at her in mild pity.

"I daresay, mum. The point is, who's to pay for it? Our profits ain't that large that we can afford luxuries in the way of talent."

"You must let us help you," declared Hilda. "My name, by the way, is Hilda Robinson. I am on the stage but I'm taking a holiday with my—my brother at the moment. I'm a pretty decent dancer. Why not let me give a dancing turn at your next stop? I could come in on a horse to give the thing a circussy touch, if you like. I'd love to dance in a circus. Do let me—it can't possibly spoil the rest of the programme."

Rudolf stood silent in frozen horror. Peter Hunt remained wrapped in thought.

"Well," he declared finally, "it's very kind of you to offer, miss. I reckon I'll say yes, if you wouldn't mind givin' a private performance just for us to see, like."

The other vehicles had come up by this time. Peter Hunt turned to a good-tempered-looking lady driving a brightly-varnished caravan, and with a cry of "Mother, I've engaged a noo performer!" introduced Hilda. Rudolf, shrugging impassive shoulders, played up gamely in support, and immediately became the sworn friend of Tom Hunt, Peter's son and heir. Hilda perched herself beside Mrs. Hunt on the varnished caravan, Rudolf vaulted on to a spare horse that Tom led, and the whole cavalcade descended triumphantly on to Windfield, Sussex.

II.

On the second evening of the visit to Windfield of Hunt's All Star Aggregation, Hilda, arrayed in the conventional short-skirted kit of a dancer, peeped through the entrance-curtains of the tent over Rudolf's shoulder. There was no doubt that her dancing had hit the public fancy. Scarcely a seat remained unsold.

"If you please, Miss," said Tom Hunt's voice behind them, "a gentleman wishes to speak to you."

She turned, and went out to meet a tall stranger, who raised his hat politely. Hilda recognised him as the occupant of a half-crown seat the night before.

"I am Captain Allardyce," he began. "I saw your performance last night, and my host, Lord Baltimore"—he waved a hand in the direction of Baltimore Park, the residence of the local celebrity—"became very anxious, when I told him about your remarkable dancing, for you to entertain his house-party after the show to-night, if you would be so good. Of course you will name your own terms. My wife and I would motor you up to the house and the car would be at your disposal for the return journey."

Hilda reflected a moment. She harboured no doubts about the tall stranger; he had the manner of his kind—the right kind. No one would recognise her in her make-up.

"Thank you," she said, "I should like to come. I will be ready at nine o'clock."

Rudolf, when he heard, raised his eyebrows, and then laughed.

"As we are being lunatics, we might as

well stick at nothing," he declared. "Think of me when you are delighting the best people. I shall be helping Tom rub down the horses."

The performance went with unaccustomed snap and vigour that night. A crowded audience cheered lustily as Hilda tossed her dainty limbs in the crude light of swinging naphtha-flares. A little intoxicated with triumph—rustic as her worshippers were—she slipped Mrs. Hunt's best coat over her dancing-dress, and hurried out to the waiting Rolls-Royce.

Captain Allardyce handed her into it with quiet courtesy. The car moved off noiselessly, and he presented her to his wife, calm, haughty, with classic features and glorious auburn hair, who sat back in a corner. Vaguely, she seemed familiar to Hilda. But on the lady's part there was no recognition, although she stared curiously for a brief second.

They swept up the famous lime-avenue to Lord Baltimore's magnificent mansion. Bowing servants flung open its portals, and Captain Allardyce conducted Hilda to the great and historic drawing-room, where his lordship, a stately and venerable old man, still erect in spite of seventy summers, received her with the perfect manners of a bygone age. The chatter among the guests died away. Lord Baltimore's private orchestra began to play Tschaikowsky's *Valse des Fleurs*. Feathery light, Hilda's feet fluttered over the parquet flooring, and for a few brief moments the guests at Baltimore Park witnessed, spellbound, the grace and poetry of the wind over the waters of a lake, or the nodding of golden daffodils. They feasted their eyes on Hilda Glaive's superb dancing.

It was over. There came the outburst of well-bred, decorous applause. Then the classic-featured, auburn-haired wife of Captain Allardyce trailed forward.

"Of course," she said, "you're Hilda Risborough—or were, before you went on the stage. Don't you remember me at school? I was Mercy Thring in those days. Father!"—she turned to Lord Baltimore—"come and be introduced to Lady Hilda Risborough. I don't know what she's doing in a circus, but it's she, sure enough!"

The guests broke out into well-bred murmurs of astonishment. Lord Baltimore bowed ceremoniously.

"You will permit an old man to tell you that your dancing is as charming as yourself," he said.

Swiftly and hilariously Hilda unfolded the story of the walking tour and the circus engagement. His lordship would not be denied, but insisted that Hilda and Rudolf should be added to the gathering. Captain Allardyce departed to bring him; Hilda was borne off to array herself in borrowed garments.

Apart from everything else, the cold cynicism of Lady Mercy's manner struck her most. She remembered her as a laughing daredevil. What could have happened to bring about such a change?

III.

On some women is bestowed the gift of comradeship, of perfect sympathy, not as a result of long acquaintance, but from the first moment of meeting. Thus it came about that, on the morning after her arrival, Lord Baltimore paced up and down the sun-washed terrace with Hilda and spoke to her of his daughter.

"I know that she is not happy," he declared sadly. "You, who remember her as a child, will have noticed a change. Marriage invariably changes a woman, but it should not turn her disposition from happiness to a cold and bitter cynicism. Allardyce is a good chap, too. I confess the situation is beyond me. If you notice any reason for the change in Mercy I wish you would be kind enough to tell me."

Hilda nodded slowly.

"I have noticed it," she replied. "Mercy isn't a bit happy. Neither is he, but he'll console himself, and she won't. If I can help I will."

He smiled his thanks, and left her as Rudolf came up. The true companions looked their welcome.

"Rudolf," she began, after a little thoughtful pause, "Mercy Allardyce isn't happy. I want you to flirt with her and discover why. I'm going to flirt with him, and draw my own conclusions. Help put them right, there's a dear."

Rudolf glanced down at her half protesting, half amused. It was a perfect morning, she a perfect girl, and his a perfect love. Who could be sad in the circumstances?

"All right, Hilda," he said. "I always knew just enough to leave red-haired girls alone, but as you will."

For a week the play proceeded on the accepted lines of comedy. Rudolf monopolised Mercy Allardyce on horseback and on foot, on the golf-links and in the drawing-room. For a week Hilda and Basil Allardyce were never apart. In the

background Lord Baltimore, the product of a bygone age that understood none of these things, watched and wondered. Except that he trusted Hilda implicitly he would have felt not a little alarmed. Down in the village, Peter Hunt, deprived of his star performer, played to diminishing houses.

On the sixth night of Hilda's stay at Baltimore Park, they had arranged a small, informal dance. The final strains of the Valse from *Coppélia* quivered on the air. Captain Allardyce led her gently but insistently out on to the terrace.

"Our seventh is a two-step and we are neither of us meant for two-steps," he declared. "Let's sit it out in the moonlight. One goes mad so easily under the moon, and we can never be mad enough in this crazy life."

"Also," said Hilda, "it is midsummer, and at midsummer it is permissible to be a little mad."

Not a breath of wind stirred the warm air, heavy with mingled scents from garden and hay-field. In a coppice some love-lorn nightingale's passion welled in a golden stream from its divine throat. Overhead the pale majesty of the moon and the brighter splendour of the stars shone from a cloudless sky.

They wandered on until they came to a stone seat hidden in the shadow of a wanton climbing rose. With a little sigh of ecstasy Hilda sat down. Captain Allardyce leant against the end of the seat and considered her.

"One could very easily go mad over you," he said slowly. "You have a perilous atmosphere, my Lady Hilda. It isn't exactly the scent of your hair, nor the whiteness of your throat, nor the sleeping devils in your eyes, but it's all of them together, and you into the bargain."

"I expect," she murmured, smiling lazily into the purple-black distance, and not looking at him, "it's just the moonlight that's got into your brain. I'm a very prosaic, business-like person really."

His hand, resting on the back of the seat, tightened into a grip of iron, and when he spoke again his voice was indistinct with emotion.

"Haven't you any heart, any humanity, any pity, you—you incarnate temptation? Do you enjoy torturing a man?"

"I?" She glanced up at him with wide eyes, the devils in them just a shade less sleepy. "I'm sitting out a two-step with my partner. I don't think I know what you mean."

His left arm slipped round behind her head and tilted it backwards. His flaming eyes searched hers for a sign of fear, and did not find it. Her breath came in little gasps, but her smile and her mouth mocked him.

"I'm going to kiss you." He cast his defiance at her with all the challenge of the conquering male. Still her eyes laughed into his.

He crushed his lips against hers for a long second. Then he disengaged his arm and stood up, half-awkward, half-resentful. She patted her disordered hair and looked at him curiously.

"Why did you do that?" she asked casually. "Did you think I should be frightened, or intoxicated with joy, or what?"

"A man of my temperament must kiss women," he flung at her.

"There is your wife. She is more beautiful than I, and you love her, and you don't love me. You aren't very logical. I thought men prided themselves on being logical."

The little cool voice goaded him to madness. She seemed not even annoyed, although he had kissed her.

"My wife be——" He stopped. "My wife does not love me, neither do I love her," he said acidly. "We are a mistake, an awful warning to young people, and so on. My wife dislikes my attentions. I am naturally a little passionate. There is no way out of the difficulty without scandal. Need I labour the point?"

"Red-haired girls are never exactly icebergs," said Hilda *à propos* of nothing.

"No! She can thaw fast enough for Mr. Rudolf Merion."

Hilda rose from the stone seat and, placing one hand on his arm, led him into the white light of the moon.

"I want to have a good look at you," she explained, "because never, never, *never* have I seen such a fool. My good idiot, you know a great deal less of your wife than you do of me, and that's little enough. I've seen her look at you as a girl in hell might look up at her lover in heaven, although you certainly don't deserve it. And you, in spite of carrying off your little affair with me with such extraordinary dash"—he seemed to shrivel under the contempt in her voice—"at the bottom of your silly, conventional, man nature, are incapable of not playing the game with Mercy. You aren't fond of me, and if you had to choose between us

you'd never notice me. Why don't you give up trying to fool yourself?"

"Hilda, I swear to you——"

She turned away.

"Captain Allardyce, you make a very poor Don Juan!" she said. "Please take me back to the house."

* * * * *

Along the green velvet of the lawn, beside a hedge of ancient, precisely clipped yew, paced Lady Mercy and Rudolf. They had drifted languorously through many waltzes—languorously on the whole, though now and again he detected a veiled ferocity, a savage under-current in her manner, that perplexed him. If he had known, it was on those occasions when Hilda floated by in the arms of Allardyce.

Suddenly she turned and faced him, her face pale and set in the moonlight, as beautiful and as hard as chiselled marble.

"I wish," she exclaimed bitterly, "that you would take me in your arms and kiss me—cover my face with kisses in the disgusting way men have. I want to get even with my husband, who is no doubt kissing Hilda in some sequestered place. It—it rankles so to think that all the little infidelities are set down to his account."

Rudolf let his glance travel from the bright, contemptuous eyes to the quivering, unhappy mouth, and tried to keep the pity that would have insulted her out of his expression.

"I don't quite see Hilda letting him," he replied, always the faithful lover, "even supposing he were to attempt such a thing, which, of course, he wouldn't do."

She laughed in his face.

"How little you know men! Basil must have kisses—*must* have, you understand. Men always *must* have what they want. I won't give them to him—I am not a housemaid to be kissed and put aside as a man pleases—and being a man, and consequently very lordly, he will, of course, get them elsewhere. And he is very irresistible—good heavens, how splendid I used to think him once!—and we women are terribly impressionable when you condescend, you know."

His left arm slipped round behind her head and tilted it backwards. His flaming eyes searched hers for a sign of fear, and did not find it.

"Don't," he murmured, and laid a hand on her arm, very gently and almost humbly, because of the agony in her voice.

In an ecstasy of self-abasement she stood before him.

"Many men have told me I am beautiful, and so I can't be asking a great deal of you. My husband doesn't go without because we—don't love one another any longer, and it isn't fair I should, is it? I never asked anyone to kiss me before, and it's—just a little difficult. You see, a woman isn't made so that she can ask for—things——"

The strained, tortured voice broke. With the eternal tenderness of a strong man for an unhappy woman, he held her in that most comfortable embrace of which men alone hold the secret, soothing her as one soothes a broken-hearted child.

"Of course you're wrong—wrong all through," he ended, almost fiercely. "Allardyce is frightfully fond of you—any *man* could see that. I'll tell you how it all happened; once upon a time, quite unconsciously, he got on your nerves, and you snubbed him. After that he took the greatest care never to let himself in for another snub, and so you both got colder and more polite. And politeness, my dear lady, is the death and damnation of love."

She shook her head in bitter disagreement.

"I'm sorry I've been a fool," she said conventionally. "My nerves have been on edge lately. Our nerves are absurdly tyrannical now and then. Will you take me back now, and we'll have our last waltz together?"

The mask was back, the blinds were drawn down over the windows of her soul. Feeling oddly irritable and distressed at he knew not what, Rudolf piloted her slowly to the ball-room. In the doorway they almost brushed against Hilda and Allardyce.

IV.

Amid the darkness of the night Hilda dreamt that she was suffocating. A relentless hand gripped her by the throat, causing her to gasp and struggle for breath, and all the while she could hear the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards playing the "1812" Symphony. Waking, she found a smoke-laden atmosphere, and heard someone thunder persistently on the door.

Struggling into a dressing-gown and slippers, she looked out. Basil Allardyce stood before her.

"Hullo!" he said. "Thought I should never wake you; the whole place is blazing like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, and we're cut off."

A fit of coughing interrupted him. In the corridor great volumes of smoke eddied towards him. Further off, flashes of flame and a terrifying roar from the well of the staircase bore out his statement. He, and his wife, and Hilda slept at the extreme end of a wing of the old house, on the third floor. Now they were completely isolated from the rest of the house-party and the servants.

Lady Mercy stepped through the doorway opposite Hilda's, and joined them. There was about her an air of supreme detachment. She might have been entering the Savoy Restaurant or Waterloo Station, instead of a corridor which had become a death-trap, for all the emotion she exhibited.

Allardyce dashed into their room and returned with a blanket soaked in water.

"Come on, we must make a dash for it!" he told his wife. "It's the only way. Shove this over your head—quick. I'm sorry, Lady Hilda—" he went on briefly over his shoulder, "but I can't save both of you at once, and my wife—" and there was a note of finality in the words—"my wife must come first."

Lady Mercy drew back.

"Thank you!" she replied coldly, "I have no desire to live. I don't find life so precious that I care to pass through fire to prolong it—even with you."

There was a strange inflexion in her voice as she pronounced the last three words. It implied many beautiful things that had existed, and passed, and would not reappear on the other side of the raging inferno which lay between her and safety.

"I will cede my opportunity to Hilda, if she cares to accept it."

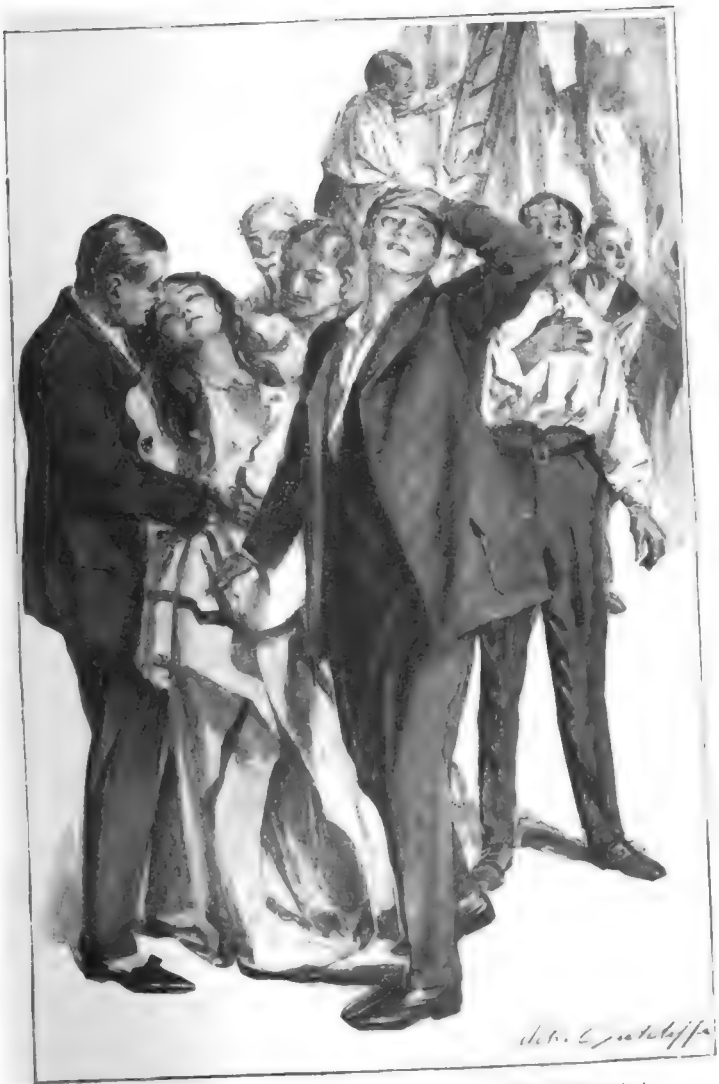
Bitterness had crept into the cool, even tones. The word opportunity took on a wealth of hidden meaning.

"Go," Lady Mercy seemed to be saying, "and enter into my inheritance, and stand where I stood, and wake the light in his eyes I used to wake and never shall wake again, and drink the cup of happiness I drank, and drink no longer—and keep it all if you can."

Allardyce flung the sodden blanket over his wife's head.

"Go into your room and shut the door. I'll come back to you if it's humanly possible," he rapped out to Hilda. Then he snatched up Lady Mercy, took a deep breath of the fairly pure air yet remaining to them, and entered upon his desperate dash for safety.

Hilda watched him go.



Rudolf Merion turned away in dumb anguish. She was not Hilda! (Page 44, col. 1.)

She glanced round. The heat was intense, and the smoke, broken here and there by tongues of flame, crept nearer. An awful roar, with intermittent crashes from falling masonry, stunned her. Escape there was none.

Hilda went back into her room and closed the door.

"Well," she murmured, "better go out young and full of courage than old and broken-spirited. If only Rudolf is safe, I don't so much care."

Then she sat down by her dressing-table and waited for the end. It could not be long in coming.

Three storeys below her, on the other side of eternity, Lord Baltimore, his guests, and the servants, stood in futile misery. The outbreak had occurred far too suddenly for any action of theirs to stem the flaming tide that surged over the ancient mansion. They had no modern appliances; the chauffeur racing in a fast car for the nearest fire-brigade, seven miles distant, might have spared his petrol. The head gardener gazed gloomily at a couple of ladders; they would not reach higher than the first floor bedrooms, and the three trapped in the blazing building slept on the third floor.

Suddenly, through the fiery portal which was the front door, staggered a wild figure, bearing a woman in his arms. His clothes were scorched and smouldering, his hair, eyelashes and moustache singed, his face blackened with smoke. He reeled and would have fallen, but willing hands supported him and relieved him of his burden. Rudolf Merion turned away in dumb anguish. She was not Hilda! Hilda was——

"My God!" moaned Allardyce, covering his face with his hand. "She's up there—Lady Hilda. And you can't reach her. The staircase has fallen in. I had to choose, and I chose my wife. Any man would have done the same. I—I——"

He turned away, and the tears were running down his face.

Then inspiration came to Rudolf Merion.

"Get those ladders against the wall under her window," he commanded. "We've about ten minutes before the fire reaches that point. You two come with me!"

A couple of men-servants raced after him. He led them round to the boiler-house which formed part of the heating installation. A perpendicular iron ladder led to the flat roof of the structure. At the upper end the ladder bent at right angles for nearly six inches, to be clamped against the wall.

"Help wrench it away!" directed Rudolf The three men got a grip and heaved. With a splintering of masonry the ladder broke loose, nearly flinging them to the ground. At top speed they bore it away, and returned to where others had already reared the gardener's wooden ladder directly beneath Hilda's window.

"I'm going up—hook-ladder!" panted Rudolf.

While they watched in astonishment he swung the light affair over his shoulder, and climbed steadily up the gardener's ladder. Deliberately he smashed the first-floor bedroom window, crouching upon the window-sill, and, putting an arm through the frame, drew himself erect.

Still they watched him, with bated breath, as he thrust his iron ladder upwards till the ends bent over at right angles rested on the second-floor window-sill directly above, and the ladder dangled, leaving just two rungs within his reach.

Breathless they saw him grip the rungs and go up steadily hand over hand. Would those six-inch bends resting on the window-sill hold? Apparently they would, because the man was kneeling on the second-floor window-sill now, methodically smashing that window, drawing up his ladder, hooking it to the third-floor sill, and swinging himself up it. The thing had become so sure and certain that the watchers below began to take it for granted.

Of course he could save her—if only the fire were not too quick, and they cast anxious glances at the flames, which approached rapidly the extreme end of the wing and cast out eager tongues towards Rudolf's frail ladder.

Hilda, almost suffocated by the dense clouds of smoke, was aroused by the crash of her window glass.

"Open—quick!" commanded a familiar voice.

With a hoarse cry of "*Rudolf!*" she staggered across and obeyed.

He dropped into the room. "Sheets—come on—help make a rope!" he exclaimed, and, choking for breath, she began mechanically to strip the bed, just as the door burst in with an appalling crash and flames from the corridor surged into the room.

Now, the improvised rope knotted round her, she was seated on her window-sill.

"You are to go down the ladder, and lower yourself on to the second-floor sill," he told her. "Yell when you're safe. Ready?"

In a dream she obeyed. In a dream she

shouted in her cracked voice, clinging desperately to the broken second-floor window, and watched him come, spider-like, down the dangling ladder.

He was beside her when the tragedy occurred. He held the iron ladder in his hand, and was about to fix it for the descent to the first-floor, where the head gardener awaited them at the top of his inadequate fire-escape, when she tottered, and would have fallen. He gripped her in the nick of time, but the iron ladder went hurtling to the earth.

And now, indeed, there remained no way of escape. Tenderly he held her, seeking to shield her with his body from the inexorable flames, whose hot breath scorched them already. The watchers below hid their faces. There was no other expedient left—no material for a jumping sheet, no succour to be expected from the hand of man.

Lady Mercy sobbed helplessly in the arms of her husband, who strove in vain to comfort her.

"You saved me, and you left her, and I believed you and she loved one another. And now I can never, never ask her to forgive me my unkind thoughts," she murmured broken-heartedly.

High above them Rudolf smoothed Hilda's dark hair with ineffable tenderness, and smiled down into her great grey eyes, that must so soon behold the awfulness of death, a smile of supreme affection.

"Stick your teeth into it, little one," he said gently, over and over again. "Don't be afraid. Nothing can hurt you as long as you aren't afraid—not that *you* ever would be."

Naturally, as if it belonged there, her hand slipped into his.

* * * * *

Along the historic avenue of lime-trees, Peter Hunt urged his two best horses with pitiless lash, and compelling voice. They tore up before the blazing house, dragging a lurching general purposes waggon behind them, and scattering the group of watchers who waited for the two on the second storey window-sill to die.

Peter dragged the smoking pair back on their haunches, and he and Tom began to pitch from the waggon a long extending ladder used for reaching the top of the circus-tent pole, in order to set up the trapeze. It was a matter of seconds to rear the ladder against the wall. Tom Hunt leapt up it, regardless of the flames which licked at him as he passed.

But Rudolf waved back the would-be rescuer. In Rudolf's arms Hilda had waited for death, and he would not suffer anyone else to lead her back to life. So, very carefully, he bore her to the ground, and only then resigned her to the women of the house-party.

Peter Hunt came up and wrung his hand.

"I heard o' it down in the village," he explained. "One o' the servants who'd a-been for the firemen told us. And I reckon we're quits now, sir, and very glad to have had a chance to pay you back."

He turned away, his honest face working with emotion.

In the eastern sky the first faint flush of dawn appeared, bringing a message of comfort to the group of mourners over the fiery passing of Baltimore House. Hilda, between Lady Mercy and Allardyce, approached Rudolf. The four drew a little apart from the rest.

"I want to thank you two," began Lady Mercy hurriedly. "Basil and I did a little confessing while you were up there in that awful room. We think you both played the game, and—and we were a couple of cads, and now we know a good deal better. And we know that when you're married, you'll *always* be decent to one another."

She slipped an arm through her husband's and a moment later Rudolf was alone with Hilda. In a sudden ecstasy of devotion he raised her hand to his lips; if he could have seen the expression in her eyes as they rested on his bent head, he would have had his reward.

(How Rudolf actually obtained his reward at the hands of Lady Hilda is told in the story which will appear next month. It is a charming story, and too good to miss.)

By courtesy of the Kalem Company

Princess Mona Darkfeather.

HANDSHAKES With DEATH

IN A CIRCLE OF FLAMES.

Written by Margaret Chute from the narrative of Princess Mona Darkfeather, a beautiful Indian actress, who plays for the Kalem Company.

If, when I try to tell you of my narrowest escape from death, I do not make my meaning quite clear, may I ask that you will pardon me? Your language is familiar to me, and I love it, but it may happen that I cannot always express myself as I should wish.

First then, I, Mona Darkfeather, Princess of an Indian tribe, have been a cinema player for many moons—months, do you term it? Indian stories and dramas have much popularity, so the cinema producers have found. And the Kalem Company, while producing a Red Indian drama near our Reservation, saw me riding and offered to make me an actress if I would join that company.

It was good work and full of joy for me. But the dangers of such a life were ever present. I will tell you why. All the plays in which I took a part dealt with Indians, and were crammed with adventures. Now, the Redmen, my kinsmen, when they become excited, cease to act, and perform in reality the deeds they are only *supposed* to do. Thus, when there is a fight, they grow mad and fight in earnest.

For me, I did not care. It was all part of a fine game; and I laughed and loved it. But I have been nearly killed, since I faced the wooden-boxed machine that records our actions. One of my nearest approaches to the cold hand of death happened during the production of a battle play, "The Navajo Blanket," in which I had to ride a horse at full gallop, among a mob of Redmen, during a fierce fight.

My adventures during the filming of "The Navajo Blanket" began when I plunged my horse into the fight, and finished when I lay, half-stunned, surrounded by a spreading circle of flames. An early scene in this drama showed a fierce battle between two Red Indian tribes, the Navajos and the Apaches.

The producer had rehearsed and arranged a realistic "battle" between the bands of Redmen engaged for this film, but once the fight started in earnest, the Indians forgot their instructions and began a real hand to hand fight.

Knowing that he would get a good

The impact was so sudden and so unexpected that I was hurled from the saddle and flung upwards over the burning wagon. [*Page 48, col. 2.*]

"picture," the producer allowed them to fight it out, forgetting that, at a given signal, I had to make my escape from the battle-field (as an Indian maiden), by riding, for my life, through the excited warriors, who should have allowed me to pass by. My signal came—and so I dug my heels into my horse, and plunged into the middle of the fight. By that hour, the Indians were too crazy to distinguish me from the other actors.

Far from allowing me to pass, they barred my way everywhere. One Redman exploded his gun, full of blank cartridges, so close to my face that my skin was badly burnt. My leather moccasins were torn from my feet, my bridle was wrenched from my hands, and finally a blow delivered by an Apache, and intended for a Navajo warrior, knocked me from my saddle. On the ground I lay, half-insensible, conscious only that many running feet were trampling and bruising me.

Instinctively I tried to shield my face, and managed to ward off a terrific blow from the barrel of a gun by rolling over as it descended within a few inches of my head. I had given up all hope of rescue, and was lying there prepared to die when I heard a voice shouting, and saw a big man striding towards me. As he reached down I saw that he was the producer; he seized my hand, and the rushing Redmen ceased their battle as if by magic. The "picture" was stopped while I was carried from the thick of the fight to safety. That is the finest and most realistic "battle" ever filmed by the Kalem Company, and in a few days, bruised but otherwise unhurt, I was able to continue my work—and to meet another greater adventure which nearly proved my last on this earth.

During the film a prairie encampment had to be destroyed by fire, lighted by the revengeful Redmen, and again I was supposed to escape on horseback. To make this picture an encampment was built—a circle of wagons joined together with a tent pitched in the centre—and scenes were acted in and round this encampment. Then the Redmen set fire to it while the camera recorded the fact.

Carefully prepared by the application of petrol, the wagons blazed furiously, and soon all that could be seen of the peaceful encampment was a blazing ring of fire. The heat was so great that the producers and operators had to keep changing their positions for fear their faces and hands should become blistered by the fire. Mounted on my horse I was awaiting orders to ride into sight of the camera and make my escape from the doomed encampment.

At last the command was given, and I spurred my horse forward. All went well for a time as I rode near the flames and then turned away. But suddenly a shower of sparks flew upwards, and, caught by the wind, were blown along over our heads, falling round me. My horse took fright and bolted. Before I could realise what had happened the crazy animal had wheeled right round, and was tearing at a frenzied gallop towards the blazing wagons.

That was the worst moment of my life, I think. I tried my hardest to check his mad flight, but I was powerless. On we rushed, until at last, with a sickening crash, my horse flung himself against a blazing wagon. The impact was so sudden and so unexpected that I was hurled from the saddle and flung upwards over the burning wagon, to fall half-stunned and terrified on a heap of ashes that had been the tent, in the centre of the flaming encampment.

Hemmed in on every side by flames, I lay on the ground, too stupefied to help myself. I could only think, I remember, "This is the end—this *must* be the end!" I lay gazing at the spreading fire, watching the flames creeping along the grass and shooting upwards. My flesh was scorched and blistered, my eyes were blinded, but I wondered, as I lay there, how long it would be before the burning wagons collapsed, and which way they would fall when they did so?

They seemed to be leaning over towards me—coming closer and closer, a mass of glowing, red-hot wood. It was like a furnace, and I was being slowly roasted. I tried to move, but could not. I wondered what the producer was doing, what he could do. I wondered how long it would be before—and then, plunging through the smoke and flame, I saw a Redman, an Indian actor, Art Ortega!

The flames closed round him, but he beat them off. On he came, nearer and nearer. I screamed, and screamed again. He saw me, and began to run. Catching me under both arms, he half lifted me, then began to drag me out of the circle of fire. My dress caught as we moved, and began smouldering; one hand was badly burnt, his shoes were on fire, but on we went. A few more steps and the smoke and flames were behind us; we were out in the cool, fresh air—in safety. And, a minute later, the whole encampment collapsed *inwards* in a shower of sparks. To that minute's delay we owe our lives.

PERKINS & the PRINCESS

"'Oh, do not despise the advice of the wise,
Learn wisdom from them that are older,
And don't try for things that are out of your reach!'
And that's what the girl told the soldier."

By John Christall.

I.

Perkins was leaning up against the wall when the Princess first danced past him. She was a Chinese Princess and complete in every detail, from the fair curls on her dainty head to the tip of her golden slipper. Perkins did not know that. He had had little acquaintance with Princesses, Chinese or otherwise. All he was conscious of in that first ecstatic moment was a flushed and happy face, a shimmer of silk and gold, and the most adorable little blue satin trousers fluttering past him in time to the music. Even the most austere of philosophers would have looked twice at the blue satin trousers.

Not that the Princess displayed these masculine trappings with any indelicacy—far from it. Look as carefully as you liked and you could only see a suspicion of them, a tiny band of blue satin fluttering between the silken skirt and the golden slippers. Perkins watched them dancing gaily round the room, and wished as he had never wished for anything before that he was a gorgeous young subaltern with his hair parted in the middle and a dress looted from Pekin itself, so that he, too, could dance with the blue satin trousers.

He hated the gorgeous young subaltern with a bitter hatred. Some men have all the luck in this world. That great maxim applies even to Bunny Hugs and Turkey Trots. It makes such a difference whom you trot with!

Perkins, as you may have guessed, was not a gorgeous young subaltern. He was something quite different. To look at him as he leant idly against the wall you would have taken him for a bank clerk or a grocer or a shopwalker out on holiday. But a large number of the Lieutenant-Governor's guests had much the same appearance. Japanese costume does not suit everybody. Even a Lieutenant-Governor loses half the customary dignity that is supposed to hedge a crown when you take away his gold lace and orders and deprive him of his stockings, and dress him up in the sombre overcoat affected by the gentlemen of Japan.

Perkins, then, looked neither more nor less aristocratic than half the people present at the costume ball. He was a short, plain little man with a straggling sandy moustache, a pair of weak blue eyes, a woefully insignificant nose and a strong Scotch accent. But in his blue and white costume he looked quite as distinguished as most Members of Council present, and he faced the world with quite as determined an appearance.

Appearances are proverbially deceptive. For all his seeming nonchalance Perkins was not at all at ease at the bottom of his heart. He carried a dreadful secret. He was an impostor.

The dreadful secret must out. Mr. Perkins for all his blue and white trappings, his determined air, and his presence at the costume ball given by the Lieutenant-Governor of Nasirabad to the *crême de la crême* of Anglo-Indian society, was nothing more or less than a tailor.

It had all happened quite simply enough. Mr. Perkins you see was employed in Calcutta. Here week in week out he measured gentlemen of all shapes and sizes who desired to be clothed in suitable attire. He measured them round the waist—many of them had very little waist and for such an extra 5 per cent. was always charged—or down the leg, or up the shoulder, reading out their varied proportions to a melancholy assistant who repeated in lugubrious tones, "27, 36, 39½, no side pockets," and lively things like that.

Mr. Perkins was new to India and after six or seven months of this sort of thing during the hot weather he came to the conclusion that he could do with a change. He approached the head of his department and for once that dignitary was amiable.

"A holiday, Mr. Perkins?" said the great man genially. "Well, I really don't see why we shouldn't spare you for a week or two. That will be all right. Take a fortnight and take my advice and spend it at Nasirabad. It is delightful up there just now."

Behold Mr. Perkins then at Nasirabad. Nasirabad is a small hill station buried in the recesses of the more inaccessible mountains that defend our Indian Empire. It is far removed from the busy world of bombs and Bengalis and tourists. At least it is as far removed as an extremely inefficient railway can contrive. Here, when the plains grow too hot, the weary Government, having lived laborious days during the winter, proceeds to toy with Amaryllis in the shade. Work is not the fashion at Nasirabad and Amaryllis, or an excellent substitute, is ever present. It is a gay spot, all dances and gymkhanas and moonlight picnics and flirtations.

Here then came Perkins, and his entry to Nasirabad society happened with a swift decision that he could hardly yet realise.

It was a fellow traveller who played the part of fairy godmother. Perkins had fed him on tongue and whisky—the dinner on the train was uneatable—and they had arrived at the hotel together and breakfasted at the same table. After breakfast they walked out to see the beauties of Nasirabad. As they strolled along revelling in the cool breezes, they passed a stone gate with a lodge at which a little knot of squat Ghurka soldiers were lounging at ease.

"Hullo!" said the fairy godmother, "the Governor's got his book out. What luck! We may as well write our names. I believe there's a dance or some sort of show on to-morrow. Got a card on you?"

Mr. Perkins had a card on him. He kept them for professional purposes. Almost before he realised what he was doing he found himself inscribing "John Perkins" in a gorgeous morocco bound volume headed "Sir Richard and Lady Anderton."

The book is divided into a number of columns. In one you write your name, in another your address, in a third your profession. If all these details are satisfactory, it then becomes the duty of the Lieutenant-Governor's private secretary to invite you to dine or dance at the Lieutenant-Governor's expense. After all, that is what Lieutenant-Governors are really paid for.

Mr. Perkins felt a little nervous. He had a horrid feeling that one of the squat Ghurka soldiers might suddenly step forward, accuse him of being a tailor, and haul him off to the deepest cell in the Nasirabad gaol. At the column headed "Profession," he hesitated for a long time. Somehow he felt that plain "tailor" did not quite meet the case.

He studied the precedents carefully. Most people seemed to describe themselves by initials. There were R.E.'s and R.A.'s and R.I.M.S.'s and all sorts of hieroglyphics of which Mr. Perkins could make neither head nor tail. The fairy godmother it appeared was an I.C.S., whatever that might mean. Mr. Perkins stooped hastily and wrote two letters after "John Perkins."

"What on earth do you suppose this fellow is?" said Sir Richard's A.D.C. to Sir Richard's private secretary that evening as he

wandered wearily through the day's list of invitations. "I. P. What's an I. P.?"

"'Indian Pilot,' I should think," said the private secretary, "or 'Indian Police,' or something of that sort. What's his name? Perkins? Don't sound very tony, does it? Send him a card. What the dickens does it matter?"

But what Mr. Perkins had intended to convey by those mysterious letters was "Independent Presbyterian"; he had been a member of that body from his youth up. Anyhow, he got his card. The Lieutenant-Governor and Lady ——— "desired the pleasure of Mr. Perkins' company at a Japanese Costume Ball," and here he was looking quite Japanesy enough to pass muster.

When the Princess first swam into his ken, Mr. Perkins was feeling somewhat uncomfortable. He was like a fish out of water. Already he began to regret his presence.

He had quite made up his mind that dancing with the "nobs" was the poorest of sports and that he was going home to his bed when the first incident of that suprising night occurred. Another two-step had just commenced. The band, cunningly hidden in a gallery over his head, was thundering out the "Policeman's Holiday."

Young men and maidens, old men and matrons, swung past in distracting confusion, and out of all that kaleidoscopic whirl of light and colour came the Princess, just as a fairy might step out of the pages of a book. From that moment the world changed for Mr. Perkins. He was no longer old; he was no longer insignificant; he was no more a tailor. Even tailors, you know, sometimes forget that they are tailors.

Mr. Perkins followed the blue satin trousers all round the room. Never for a second did they stop fluttering.

For three whole dances he watched them. At the fourth dance he waited anxiously for their reappearance, but could see no sign of them. Already the room was full. The band was playing a low dreamy waltz. Surely they could not resist that appeal?

And then suddenly Mr. Perkins started. The Princess was beside him. She was standing quite close to him talking to the same gorgeous subaltern with whom he had first seen her. He was so near that he could see the down-dropped line of her eye-lash and the delicate scorn of her tip-tilted nose. He could even hear what she was saying.

"Certainly not," said the Princess in emphatic tones.

"Oh, I say," pleaded the gorgeous subaltern, "you promised me four."

Mr. Perkins could not help overhearing.

"I said 'three,'" said the Princess. "I never said I would give you the extras, too."

"Well, this one, at any rate," remonstrated the subaltern.

"No," said the Princess firmly, "I can't. I'm dancing with someone else."

"Oh, very well," returned the other. It was plain that he had lost his temper.

Mr. Perkins longed to tell him so. The Princess, looking round the room, caught his eye. Hastily he looked the other way. He had no wish to be caught eavesdropping. When, after a moment or two he glanced round, the Princess was alone. She was scanning the room apparently looking for her partner.

Again she caught Mr. Perkins' eye. She smiled slightly. Perhaps she recognised him as a spectator of her little comedy of errors. Perhaps she was merely mistaking him for someone else. The latter, alas! was much the more probable. But whatever its origin, the smile admitted him to a certain delicious intimacy. Mr. Perkins smiled back, and at that identical moment Fate again intervened in the person of the Fairy Godmother.

The Fairy Godmother was an elderly gentleman, rotund, slightly bald, and good-humoured. He was dancing gaily round the room with a hoyden of thirty-eight or so when he caught sight of the Princess standing in the doorway, and halted conscience striken. Hastily depositing his partner in a convenient chair, he rushed up breathless, and once more Perkins was compelled to listen.

"I wasn't dancing this with you, Miss Rose, was I?" said the Fairy Godmother.

"I thought so," said Miss Rose.

Was ever girl more fittingly named?

"Then I've made a perfectly hopeless muddle," said the Fairy Godmother in a cheerful tone that implied that this was no new experience. "I generally do, you know."

"Oh, never mind," cried the Princess laughing. "Go away and dance. You're missing half of it."

"Do let me find you a partner," said he, and then, looking round, saw Perkins.

"Hullo!" he said, in the same cheerful tone, "why aren't you dancing, man? What's the good of wearing a gorgeous thing like that, if you don't dance? Miss Rose, let me introduce Mr. Perkins to you. He saved my life on the journey up with cold

tongue and the most admirable whisky, and he is one of the best dancers in Calcutta or Singapore or Pekin or Lassa or some haunt of fashion. Nobody told me that, Miss Rose; I guessed it. I'm so sorry I was such an idiot, but I'm sure you'll find Mr. Perkins an admirable substitute," and the Fairy Godmother rushed off in a whirl of explanations and apologies to his deserted partner.

Mr. Perkins stood tongue-tied and confused. The thing was too utterly unexpected and surprising. He felt himself unequal to the situation. But the Princess came to his aid.

"He's always like that," she said smiling. There was something infectious about her smile. Mr. Perkins found himself returning it. "He's always like that," repeated the Princess. "I hope you don't mind, Mr. Perkins?"

"I'm de—de—de—lighted," said Mr. Perkins. "Sh—sh—sh— all we dance?"

"Come on," said the Princess. "They've nearly finished."

She placed a hand on Mr. Perkins' shoulder. She allowed his arm to encircle a waist so slim and tender that you would hardly have believed it to be a waist. She was tall and slim was the Princess, so tall that her fair head over-topped her partner's. The fact troubled Mr. Perkins somewhat. He regarded himself in a friendly mirror that reflected, oh wonderful spectacle! a Japanese Mr. Perkins with the Princess in his arms. After all, the difference was only an inch or so.

The Princess danced as a Princess should, with a careless lilting gaiety of step that would have made the clumsiest of partners keep time. And Mr. Perkins, for all his social disqualifications, was anything but a clumsy partner. In his own suburban way he danced extremely well

The dance was a dream. At its conclusion Mr. Perkins found himself sitting out with the Princess in the retired seclusion of a conservatory.

The Princess was gay and he rose to her mood. He was witty, he was gallant, he was amusing. Ideas bubbled from his lips, and the Princess, oh, wonder of wonders! laughed at them. He even found himself paying compliments. Finally he plucked up courage to ask for another dance.

"I'm so sorry," said the Princess.

"Cut some one," suggested the unscrupulous Perkins. After all it was only a dream.

"That's not the reason," said the Princess. Her eyes sparkled with fun. She put a confidential hand on his arm.

"Nobody else knows," she went on, "but I don't mind telling you Mr. Perkins. You won't tell?"

"I am the soul of discretion," replied Perkins. He had once heard a hero on the stage thus describe himself.

"I'm going after this dance," said the Princess. "I'm—I'm eloping. There!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Perkins.

"Yes, isn't it shocking?" said the Princess, "But, then you see, you don't know pa."

"But—but—there's nowhere to elope to," said Perkins.

Nasirabad is separated from the railway by seventy miles of indifferent road.

"Pa has a motor," said the Princess quite simply. "It's a pet. And he'll be playing bridge all the evening. He always does at dances."

"Good Heavens!" said Mr. Perkins. He was sure it was a dream.

"And Jack's sent a chauffeur for me," said the Princess.

"Well, I am blowed!" said Mr. Perkins, as the whole nefarious design unfolded itself. "Well, I'm blowed!"

"Oh, don't say that, Mr. Perkins," said the Princess appealingly. "And I did so want someone to wish me luck. That's why I told you. You're a stranger and it can't matter to you. Do wish me luck, Mr. Perkins. Do be a dear and wish me luck."

Mr. Perkins was a dear. Who shall blame him?

"Can't I help?" he asked. It was a declaration of alliance.

"I don't think so," said the Princess. "Oh, if you would——"

"I will," declared Perkins. "What is it?"

The Princess explained. The motor, it appeared, was to wait for her at the bottom of the hill that led up to the Lieutenant-Governor's castle. She had arranged that already with the chauffeur. Her only difficulty was the getting there. She meant to slip away under cover of the next dance, trusting to escape notice in the darkness. But if she went with a man, even if anyone saw her they would merely think that she was seeking a retired place to sit out. Would Mr. Perkins slip with her? Mr. Perkins would.

Ten minutes afterwards he stood at the top of the drive with the Princess on his arm. He carried their coats. At the foot of this hill, a long dark slope running between two hedges of flowering shrubs, he perceived a

monster. It was black as the night itself, and from its mouth proceeded the most distressing sounds, while it kept up a hoarse low roaring.

Mr. Perkins advanced boldly, heedless of danger. After all, he had just emerged from fairyland, where monsters were a commonplace. As they approached, the monster resolved itself into a long, low, powerful, wicked-looking motor. It was spitting convulsively, and a native driver was poking about the bonnet. His actions inspired no confidence, and his hat was tilted at a rakish angle.

When he saw them he propped himself up against the car, sustaining his erect position with difficulty. If this was Jack's chauffeur it was pretty plain to Mr. Perkins' experienced eye that he had been trying the Lieutenant-Governor's champagne or something even stronger. The Princess voiced his suspicion.

"Good Heavens!" said she. "The man's drunk."

"He does seem so," admitted Perkins.

Between them they propped the chauffeur into the back seat of the car.

The driver—he was a Sikh—twirled his long moustache over his ear with a vacant grin and made no effort to deny the soft impeachment.

"Sir," he said in passable English. "Me loyal subject. Me sing 'Rule Britannia,' and 'God save our Gra-a-a-cious'—Oh!"

At this point he collapsed and slid gracefully into a sitting posture with his legs under the bonnet.

"Oh, whatever am I to do?" said the Princess.

"I should put it off for a day or two," said Perkins. "He's as drunk as an owl."

"But I can't," wailed the Princess. "I've written to pa already. You don't know pa."

"Tear it up," said Perkins.

"But it's posted," said the Princess. "And he'll get it to-morrow."

They looked at each other over the prostrate chauffeur. Her eyes were tragic. Perkins felt his heart throb with the pulse of resolution. He made a half step towards her.

"I'll drive you," he said firmly.

It was not such a rash proposition as it sounded. Before he took up tailoring Mr. Perkins had spent a year or so in a garage in the hope that he might make his fortune.

"But can you?" asked the Princess.

"Of course I can," said Perkins. "I can drive. Really."

"But it's seventy miles," said the Princess doubtfully.

"I wish it was seven hundred," declared Perkins gallantly.

"Oh, you are a dear!" said the Princess, and to Perkins' intense astonishment she fell on his neck and kissed him heartily. He was quite sure he must be dreaming.

Five minutes later he was certain of it. Everything happened with the delightful inconsequence of a dream. Between them they propped the chauffeur into the back seat

of the car. Perkins climbed into the driving seat. The Princess got in beside him.

He knew the car. It was a make he had often driven. The engine bubbled for a second, then fell into a long steady purr; he touched the levers, and they slid into the wonderful night, flying through the streets of the little town.

The Princess nestled in beside him. He could feel the soft touch of her dress. He sat up and gripped the steering wheel feeling that any adventure that might come would find him equal to it.

II.

Possibly if Mr. Perkins had known the adventure that followed close on his heels that eventful night he would not have felt so confident. But then you see, Mr. Perkins, as the Princess had remarked more than once, did not know pa. If he had he might not have played the part of young Lochinvar so well as he did.

For one thing pa was large, very much larger than Mr. Perkins. For another he was the possessor of an extremely furious temper. Also his motor was as the apple of his eye. In his family it was known as the Pet, and no one else was allowed to lay a finger on it.

The Princess had laid her plans skilfully. Her paternal parent had already had his supper, and she had carefully shepherded him in the direction of the bridge room. Here he was safe for the next three hours at least. During that period he would be far too much occupied laying down the law to his unhappy partner to pay any attention to a mere daughter.

But the Princess could never have foreseen that pa would choose that particular night of all nights to revoke. This happened once a year, for pa was no mean player, but when it did happen empires rocked and the house was no safe place to live in. The catastrophe occurred about half-an-hour after Mr. Perkins and the Princess and the chauffeur saw the lights of Nasirabad fade and vanish behind them.

What exactly happened remains a mystery to this day. Young Smith, who was one of the four, says that he has never heard such language before, and adds regretfully that he never hopes to hear the like again. Anyhow the upshot of it was that Pa appeared in the ballroom quite two hours sooner than his daughter expected, very red in the face and extremely explosive.

"Where," he demanded from an unsympathetic world, "was the use in playing bridge with men like that, men who should never have attempted anything more intricate than grab or snap? He was going home at once—*at once*. He had had enough of this infernal folly. Where was that confounded daughter of his?"

Then, of course, to put it vulgarly, the fat was in the fire. The Princess was not to be found. She had vanished into thin air. In a very few minutes all Government House was full of agitated A.D.C.'s searching for her.

The Colonel himself—Pa held that exalted rank—drew several cosy corners, and flushed a brace in each, but of Miss Rose there was no sign.

"She must have gone home," suggested an A.D.C.

"I hope she's gone to blazes," said the Colonel. "I'm not going to wait for her any longer. Where's my car?"

Pa's language when he found that the Pet had also vanished will not bear repeating. He had had enough of this nonsense he announced to the unhappy A.D.C. who was attending his departure. He would tell the Governor. If this was a practical joke he was not going to put up with it. If it was theft, then he expected somebody to do something violent.

Pa with all his faults was a person of importance, and when he stirred himself things usually happened in Nasirabad. The Governor's life was made a burden to him. Messengers were despatched here, there, and everywhere. The telephone wires hummed furiously.

At last a heated A.D.C. produced a terrified sentinel who knew something. They questioned him closely. Even the Governor questioned him. His answers almost gave the Colonel apoplexy.

Yes, he had seen the Colonel Sahib's car. There was a Mem-Sahib in it, also a Sahib. No, he had thought nothing. It was proceeding very furiously down the main road. But then the Colonel Sahib always drove furiously. He thought it was the Colonel Sahib going out to eat the air with some lady.

"Rubbish!" said Pa explosively, "the man's drunk!"

But the telephone soon brought confirmation of his story. The car was nowhere to be found, and Miss Rose was not at home.

"It's that villain, Denny," said the Colonel. "She's run away with him. I'll wring his

Perkins was still grasping his spanner. He hurled it full in the Colonel's face and sprinted round the back of the car. (Page 56, col. 2.)

confounded neck, and hers, too. Lend me a car, somebody."

A car was forthcoming immediately. It was the Lieutenant Governor's, a Daimler, and a flyer. They were only too pleased to be rid of Pa, but they took the precaution of sending an A.D.C. with him. The A.D.C. did not like it much, but even A.D.C.'s must obey when stern duty calls. They lost no time. Twenty minutes after the first discovery they swung out of the porch of Government House amidst a crowd of excited guests, with Sir Richard himself waving a farewell to them from the steps.

"I hope to goodness he doesn't catch her, my dear," said Sir Richard to his wife as they turned back to the ballroom.

The rest of this story is best presented as a drama shown on the cinematograph. The *motif* of the picture is the long white ribbon of road swinging downwards, ever downwards round corner after corner, dropping from pines and firs and bare grass slopes to the dense tropical undergrowth that clothes the foot of the ranges.

In the background would be the giant hills changing ever so little in form and shape as the cars race on mile after mile. Flying along the long white road under the silent stars you would see the two cars, the pursuers and the pursued, two tiny splashes of white light dancing in and out of the curves of the hills like fireflies, flitting steadily downwards.

At one point in the journey the road swings out from the hills on to a level moor. Here for ten miles or so it runs along the flat with a brawling burn beside it for company. On every side lie crouched great hills, rounded and grassy.

Perkins and the Princess were half-way across the moor before they even guessed at pursuit. They had almost reached its further edge when the Princess, looking back, gave a little gasp of dismay.

"Oh!" she cried, clutching his arm. "Oh, what's that?"

He turned his head. Away up on the hillside above them he saw a splash of light flicker for a second and then vanish.

"It's a car," said the Princess.

"It looks like one," Perkins admitted.

Ten minutes later there was no doubt of it. They were hunted. What was more they must have been seen. There on that open waste there was no chance of concealment.

The next ten miles were a breathless chase. The odds were against them. Perkins did not know the road and it was a road that wanted knowing. Once as he swung round a corner his head-lights flashed upon a sleepy bullock cart meandering idly from side to side of the road, and he escaped destruction by a

miracle. But the lights of the pursuing car drew nearer and nearer and in a few more miles it was clear to both that they must be overtaken.

"We'd better wait for them," said Perkins. "It's no use breaking our necks and that's a faster car, miss."

The Princess never noticed the slip.

"I daren't," she wailed.

Fate settled the question for them. Suddenly the car slowed down. With a sickening sensation Perkins realised that the engine no longer answered to the touch of the accelerator. It grunted spasmodically once or twice, and then stopped.

"Oh, go on," urged the Princess. "Oh, go on."

"I can't," said Perkins. "The beastly thing's stopped."

"Make it go," said the Princess wildly. "Make it go."

He was out on the road in a minute. But he could not locate the trouble, and he was still busy with the engine when the lights of the pursuing car flashed out on the hill-side above them. Its siren whistled triumphantly. It had run them to earth.

"Oh!" cried the Princess, "keep them here," and picking up her skirts she flew like the wind down the road.

Here was a nice predicament for a romantic tailor!

Perkins stood his ground. As the great Daimler slid noiselessly up beside his car he seized a spanner convulsively. Heaven knows what he proposed to do with it. But when the car drew up and Pa with a roar of rage descended upon him, he gave up all idea of resistance and dodged behind the bonnet.

"You infernal villain!" bellowed Pa. "You needn't run away. I knew we should catch you."

Perkins tasted the bitterness of defeat and resented it.

"Of course," he said spitefully, "anybody could catch a rotten old rattle-trap like this," and he indicated the Pet with a disdainful wave of his hand.

"What the blazes do you mean, you disgusting little bounder?" roared the Colonel.

"Well, look at it," said Perkins from the other side of the bonnet. A wild idea had sprung up in his brain. If he could only get the Colonel's attention distracted!

The Colonel forgot his daughter. He almost forgot his rage. Never had he heard anyone speak of the Pet like this.

"What have you been doing to my car, you meddlesome idiot?" he roared. "It never stops. It's a far better car than this thing of the Governor's. We never ought to have caught you. You've been meddling with it."

"I think a bearing's seized," said Perkins calmly. The Colonel was already busy with the bonnet.

"Good Lord!" he groaned. "Just look at this, Smith."

Smith was the A.D.C. who had been told off to accompany him. He descended leisurely.

"I expect it's only a sparking plug," he said. "My man'll soon put it right. Here, Abdul, just look at these plugs."

The driver of the Daimler got down also, and busied himself with the unfortunate Pet. Perkins' own chauffeur had by this time recovered sufficiently to take an intelligent interest in his operations.

"But where's Miss Rose?" said the A.D.C. Perkins was waiting for that. He still kept the Pet's bonnet between himself and Pa.

"She's hiding somewhere," said Pa. "Silly little fool. Rose—Rose!"

Needless to say Rose did not answer.

"Where is she, you young villain?" roared Pa. "Where have you put her? Just wait till I catch you——"

He made a rush forward. Perkins was still grasping his spanner. He hurled it full in the Colonel's face and sprinted round the back of the car, then with the same movement leapt into the vacant driving seat of the great Daimler.

"Here, stop him—stop him!" cried the A.D.C.

It was too late. The engine was still running. A touch of the levers and the great car slid noiselessly forward. The A.D.C. made one wild jump for the footboard, hung there for a minute, and, then, slipping, fell on his back on the road, and the Colonel, as he picked himself up, saw the Daimler vanish round the corner with the driver in hot pursuit.

Half-a-mile down the road Perkins picked up a dusty and dishevelled Princess suffering from a violent stitch in her side. She was sobbing when he found her, and when she realised that it was Perkins and not Pa, she threw her arms round his neck and called him her hero. He felt that he deserved the title.

Two hours later, in the grey light of the dawn, the Daimler drew up outside the railway station. The place seemed deserted, but the mail was due in five minutes and the mail would bring Jack.

"We're too soon," said Perkins, digging his watch out of the recesses of his costume.

"Oh, Mr. Perkins," said the Princess, "how can I thank you?"

For a second or two he made no answer. There, away out to the east, in the track of the rising sun, Jack was hurrying up to claim his bride. The romance was ended. He was only a tailor once more. He looked out down the road in front of him, and his weak mouth trembled a little.

"Good-bye, Princess," he said. She looked at him. Perhaps for a moment she understood a little. Then round the corner swept the train.

"Oh, there he is!" cried the Princess, as her quick eyes noticed the fluttering handkerchief. In a second she was out of the car.

She had forgotten Perkins. Love is always selfish.

When she and Jack had a little time to think of other matters than their own absorbing interests, she looked for the car. It had disappeared and Perkins had disappeared with it. After all, you see, he knew the world. Princesses do not usually associate with tailors.

After many adventures he returned to Calcutta bronzed and weather-beaten two days before the end of his leave. The chief of his department expressed surprise.

"Find it dull?" he asked. "What did you do with yourself?"

"Oh, I did a bit of motoring," said Perkins. "About that evening dress coat, sir, of Mr. Brown's——"

One more scene and one only. A dusty day in June; the electric fans spinning wildly in an effort to mitigate the heat; the shop a mixture of odours, of which that from the heavy rolls of cloth is the least offensive; Mr. Perkins, his coat off, bending over his board with a brown paper pattern and some chalk.

Enter a shopwalker with a customer, a lady, in search of the tailoring department. She plunged into her business without delay.

"Yes, I want some hot weather suits for my husband. Something that won't shrink, and that won't lose its colour. It's so difficult to get anything satisfactory."

"I think you'll find this perfectly satisfactory," said Mr. Perkins, deserting his patterns and digging out a long roll of cloth. And then he saw. It was the Princess. But she never knew him.

After all it was better that way. He did not want her to know him as a tailor. But he got the other cutter to make up those suits. Even tailors can be jealous.

THE GENIUS.

'Twas in the summer that we met,
At Margate, where the sands are yellow;
"What is your work?" I asked—he looked
A bright and brainy sort of fellow.
"I write for all the magazines."
I gazed in envy unaffected,
I, who had sought in vain to sell
A poem, thrice three times rejected.
"The best?" "The very best," said he,
"Weeklies and monthlies, 'Punch,' and so on."
I gazed upon his face. It gave
No clues at all for me to go on.
No hint of Kipling, Shaw, or Wells;
The genius of Doyle was lacking,
No signs of wealth his garments bore,
His boots, I noticed, needed blacking.
"Your name?" 'Twas Jones. "I live," quoth he,
"Remote from town or teeming city,
And write for all the magazines . . .
I'm on the Library Committee!"

William Freeman.

HOW TO ENTER THE CONTEST TO-DAY.

The first forty-eight pictures appeared in the "Royal Magazine" for July, August, September, and October. Copies may be obtained through any newsagent for 4½d. each, or the four numbers will be sent post free for 1s. 8d. from the Publisher, "Royal Magazine," 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

£1,000 IN CASH

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GREAT NEW PICTURE PUZZLE CONTEST.

FIRST PRIZE: £500.

SECOND PRIZE £200 **THIRD PRIZE £100** **FOURTH PRIZE £50**

Ten Prizes of £5 Pathéphones (with records),
One Hundred Prizes of £1 each.

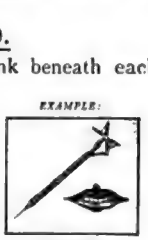
ON the opposite page you will find a set of twelve pictures representing the names of railway stations which have been selected by the Editor, and further sets of pictures will appear monthly in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. These prizes are offered to the readers who discover the names of the railway stations represented under the conditions below.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Competitors are required to write clearly in ink beneath each picture the name of the station they believe it represents, fill in their names and addresses in the space provided, cut out the page, and keep it until further instructions appear in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

First look at the example. You will see that the picture shows a dart and a mouth. The correct answer is DARTMOUTH.

EXAMPLE:



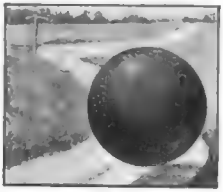
DARTMOUTH.

READ THESE CONDITIONS CAREFULLY.

1. Write the name of each station clearly in ink. One name only is allowed under each picture.
2. No alterations may be made in the names. If you have made a mistake, cross out the word and write it afresh. When you have filled up your list cut it out and keep it till we tell you what to do with it.
3. Competitors may send in as many complete series of pictures as they please, but each complete series will be judged independently. Sets must be fastened together in the top left-hand corner.
4. The prize of £500 will be paid to the competitor from whom the Editor receives a complete series of pictures with all the names correct of the actual stations as represented. If no competitor sends in a correct list the prize of £500 will go to the sender of the most nearly correct list. In the event of ties the prizes will be divided.
5. The Editor of the ROYAL will not be responsible for the loss or non-delivery of any attempt, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt or delivery.
6. No member of the staff of the ROYAL MAGAZINE may enter for this competition.
7. Only the names of railway stations found in Pearson's List of Railway Stations will be admitted. This list is obtainable for 3d. through any newsagent or bookstall, or it will be sent post free for three penny stamps by The Publisher, Room 14, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
8. Competitors must agree to abide by these conditions, and the Editor's decision is in every respect final.

SIXTH SET OF PICTURE PUZZLES (Nos. 49—60).

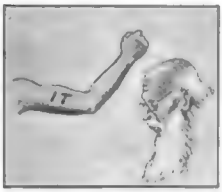
49. .....



50. .....

51. .....

52. .....



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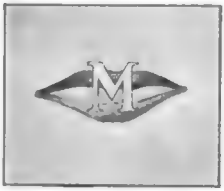

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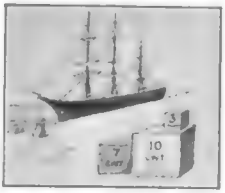

57. .....

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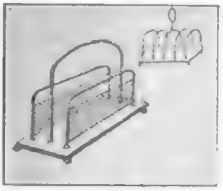


59. .....

60. .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

"The Smith, a Mighty Man is He."

By D. M. E. Gardom.

I.

"*Smith!*" said Miss Mallory, clicking her knitting-needles fiercely. "Leslie Smith, indeed!"

From the cap of Mechlin lace crowning her white hair and severe, aristocratic face, to the black satin shoes peeping from under her brocaded skirt, and reflecting the red fire-light in their old paste buckles, she was scorn incarnate.

"Smith!" she exclaimed again in a crescendo of horror. "Was there ever such a name?"

"Often, I imagine," answered her niece drily. "I thought that was why you had such an objection to it!"

"Don't be pert, Elsa," said Miss Mallory sharply.

Elsa Mallory rose from her chair and walked up and down the softly-carpeted London drawing-room. The rose-shaded electric lamps shed a subdued glow of light on the white walls, on the pots of early daffodils and hyacinths grouped on the tables in the rose-curtained windows, on Elsa's gold-brown hair and small oval face—tanned now by six weeks of Swiss snow and sunshine. Her forehead was knit in a worried frown, but her deep, blue eyes held a light of great happiness behind the worry.

"For goodness' sake, Elsa, stop walking about and come and sit down," cried Miss Mallory, folding up her knitting in her decided way.

Elsa drew up a great rose-coloured cushion of a footstool and sat on it at her aunt's feet, clasping her hands round her knees.

"Now," said Miss Mallory, her black eyes softening a little as Elsa's blue ones looked up into them, "let's have it all clear. You met this—Smith—at Montana. What was Mrs. de Lachlan doing not to look after you better?"

"No one bothers about that sort of thing out there," answered Elsa a trifle impatiently. "Besides she liked him; so did everyone; so would you, auntie."

"H'm," sniffed Miss Mallory doubtfully. "Well—you've known him, how long?"

"Five weeks," Elsa said softly, her eyes now on the glowing coals.

"And what is he?"

"He's an artist. He illustrates beautiful books."

"And where does he live?"

"He has a little house with a studio at—Corbham." Elsa brought out the last word defiantly; she trembled for its reception and her fears were justified.

"Corbham! The most God-forsaken of all the suburbs!" cried Miss Mallory in disgust. "I could never have thought it of you, Elsa—you, a Mallory of Mallory, to fall in love in a Swiss hotel with a penniless suburban artist called Smith—Smith!" she repeated, as if the reiteration of the obnoxious name would clear her mind of the sound of it.

"He's not penniless," said Elsa, desperately bringing forth her last resource; "he's very well off. But he finds Corbham convenient——"

"Don't mention the place again," her aunt interrupted. "It makes me feel quite ill to think of it; I don't care if he's a millionaire—and what do you know about him, a man you meet in that happy-go-lucky way, just ski-ing and skating and dancing with him? He may have several wives already!"

Elsa laughed merrily.

"After all, auntie, you can easily find that out before I marry him. And wasn't cousin Mary Penfold a Smith?"

"My *dear* Elsa!" Miss Mallory assumed what her niece called her Royal manner. "*The* Smiths of Sutherfield are slightly different from *a* Smith of Corbham! It is not very likely there should be any connection between them."

The Dresden clock on the mantelpiece struck ten, and she rose and gathered up her work.

"I shall never give my consent to your engagement to this Smith, Elsa. You can write and tell him you've changed your mind—unless you prefer to marry without my permission, but I hope that twenty years of love and care count for something with you, even if your name and the line you come of do not."

Miss Mallory's voice shook a little. In spite of her severity, Elsa was very dear to her. She kissed her now almost tenderly and the girl's eyes filled with tears; she had only arrived that afternoon from Switzerland, and she was tired from the long journey and the excitement.

"Oh, auntie, I can't give him up! Just let him come and see you, anyhow," she pleaded.

Miss Mallory patted her on the shoulder.

"Well, well, go to bed, child; you're worn out. He shall come and see me then, but—Smith!" she murmured, shaking her head sadly as her niece went out of the room.

In her luxurious pink and white bedroom Elsa sent away the maid who was finishing her unpacking, and sat down to think. She had food for thought. Leslie Smith had declared his intention of coming to plead his cause with her aunt the very next afternoon. Elsa, in the excitement of an engagement that must be kept secret till she could see her aunt and guardian, in the joy of ski-ing expeditions *à deux*, of evenings spent in dancing and sitting-out chiefly with one person, had never spoken to her lover of Miss Mallory's prejudice against everything and everyone not manifestly of her own aristocratic world.

Now there would be no opportunity, for she knew that Leslie was coming up to town in the morning, so a wire would probably miss him—she could never manage to see him alone with the footmen about the hall in the afternoon; he would never satisfy Miss Mallory on the score of his unfortunate name unless he were forewarned.

"If *only* I could see him first, to tell him he *must* be connected with some wretched high-born Smiths," groaned Elsa. "I can't marry without auntie's consent, and she'll never give it. How *can* I warn him?—unless. I wonder—I wonder!"

She sat thoughtful for some time, then rose and pressed the bell.

"Run down to the morning-room, Louise, and fetch me a Bradshaw!" she said to the maid who appeared.

And while Miss Mallory, with her mind full of resolutions for the routing of the objectionable Smith, fell peacefully asleep, her niece sat with furrowed brow, pencil in hand, looking out the early morning trains to Corbham.

II.

Corbham High Street, at half-past eight on a raw winter morning, is not alluring. With relief Elsa turned up a side road bordered by rather pretty little modern

houses, each with a well-tended front garden. Presently she came to one rather larger than the rest, white, with a green front door, and a big bay window on each side of it. A little green gate, bearing the legend, "The White Cottage," opened on to a tiled path which, with intervals of short flights of steps, led between grassy banks to the front door, and a privet hedge, surmounting a low red wall, hid passers-by from the house. A barn-like structure on the left was evidently the studio.

This, then, was Leslie's home.

"It's a dear little place, in spite of being at Corbham," thought Elsa.

Her heart was beating so fast that she walked slowly past the gate to try to calm herself before going in. She dared not dwell on Miss Mallory's horror could she see her niece meditating an unchaperoned entry into a bachelor's house before breakfast. The thought of breakfast made her feel hungry, and she pictured Leslie and herself sitting down to a comfortable meal of, probably, sausages—artists always lived chiefly on sausages—before she caught the 9.37 back to London (Leslie probably travelling up with her), and reached Queen's Gate in time to appear before her aunt as having got up late after her journey of yesterday.

She had told Louise not to call her and had slipped out of the house unobserved at half-past seven. The combined visions of Leslie and sausages made her turn towards the green gate again, but she stood outside it for a moment, imagining Leslie's expression of surprise and delight when he should see her, imagining his arms round her.

A woman was coming down the road, wheeling a pram—a little, fair-haired, rather pretty woman, neatly dressed, but with a somewhat common air about her. She also stopped when she reached the green gate and looked uncertainly at Elsa, who was looking at the baby in the pram. She could never resist babies, and this was a blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked attractive thing of about two years.

"What a darling!" murmured Elsa, as with an engaging smile he stuck out a hand in a woolly fingerless glove towards her.

"He's a beautiful boy," she said to the mother, who smiled proudly, and looked from Elsa to the gate, and then at Elsa again.

"I wonder," she said, "if you'd mind very much, if you'd be so good as just to hold the pram while I run in here for a minute? He works himself about so if he's left I'm afraid of his falling out, and the pram's heavy for these steps."

She had a pretty voice, spoilt by a rather common accent.

"Certainly," agreed Elsa graciously, laying a hand on the pram handle.

"Wait with this lady, while mummy goes to see daddy," said the woman to the baby who was now staring solemnly in Elsa's face.

Elsa started violently.

"Do you—do you live here?" she asked in amazement.

"My husband lives here," answered the baby's mother, opening the gate as she spoke. 'Now, Leslie, mind you're good."

"Leslie!" cried Elsa. Her heart gave a great leap, and then seemed to stop beating altogether. Some words of her aunt's rang in her brain: "He may have several wives already." She clutched the porcelain handle tightly and, in a voice that shook despite all her efforts, stammered out: "I thought—I thought it was Mr. Smith's house!"

"So it is," answered the fair-haired woman; "he lives here, and—— Well! of all the curious people I ever met!"

For the pleasant-spoken young lady in the beautifully cut coat and skirt and real fox furs was flying away up the road at a most undignified speed, in the direction of the High Street.

III.

A few mornings later Miss Mallory and her niece sat at breakfast in the comfortable morning-room in Queen's Gate. The Swiss tan on Elsa's cheeks was fading rapidly, her eyes had lost their dancing light of happiness, and she looked a good deal older than that evening when she had sat by the fire and pleaded Leslie Smith's cause with her aunt—that evening that seemed now a hundred years ago.

Miss Mallory, who had been not a little puzzled by her niece's absolute silence on the subject of her engagement ever since the evening of her return from Switzerland, gave quite a delighted little cry as she looked up from one of her letters:

"Oh, Elsa, I have heard from Cousin Mary Penfold. It seems that that Mr. Smith of yours *is* a distant cousin of hers after all. He went to live at Corbham to do his painting in opposition to his family's wishes, and Cousin Mary doesn't seem to know any more about him—but he must be all right if he is a Sutherfield Smith. I mentioned it to her when I wrote——"

"It doesn't matter, auntie," said Elsa in a

strained voice, handing Miss Mallory her coffee. "I changed my mind about things, and wrote to—Mr. Smith."

"My *dear* child! How startling you are! I wondered why he never came to see me, but I hoped you were being sensible."

"I was, you see," Elsa replied with a little sharp laugh. "He did come, the afternoon after I got home. I told James to say I was out, and then I wrote."

She gave a great sigh as if it were a relief to have got it said, and went on pouring out her own coffee.

Elsa started violently. "Do you—do you live here?" she asked in amazement. "My husband lives here," answered the baby's mother, opening the gate.

"Elsa," said Miss Mallory, quite gently for her, and trying to see her niece's face across the flowers and silver of the table, "are you sure you have done wisely, my dear?"

Elsa gave that sharp, mirthless laugh again:

"Very wisely, auntie!"

"Well, of course, you know best yourself. Still his being a Sutherfield Smith might have made all the difference. Will you have sausages?"

"No, *anything* but sausages!" cried Elsa with sudden violence; and then, at her aunt's look of surprise, "I'm sorry, auntie," she said. "I didn't sleep very well last night and I dreamt—I dreamt about sausages!"

Her voice broke on the last word, and abruptly she rose and fled from the room.

"I'm afraid that Smith is at the bottom of it all," said Miss Mallory sorrowfully, helping herself disconsolately to the despised sausages.

IV.

It was very hot.

The intrusive July sunshine forced its way even through green linen awnings and sun-blinds into cool, shaded rooms, and it beat fiercely and mercilessly on the unsheltered pavements of the London streets.

At two o'clock, the hottest hour of all the day, Elsa Mallory came down the steps of 1700 Queen's Gate, into the white glare of the street. She wore a cool, white muslin dress, a light tussore dust coat, and a shady, rose-trimmed hat, and looked cool and fresh, but her face was very pale, her eyes had a tired look, and she moved listlessly as if everything were too much trouble.

After walking a short way she hailed a passing taxi, and, seated inside it, clenched and unclenched her hands almost feverishly.

"It's mad of me, quite mad, but I must see him once—I must just see him," she whispered miserably.

It was the last day of July. The weary London season was over at last. To-morrow, Elsa and Miss Mallory were going up to Cousin Mary Penfold's castle in Ross-shire.

Elsa had left Louise in the throes of packing, and yielded at last to the mad impulse which had been driving her for many days.

She wanted just to see Leslie once more; just to walk past his house in the hope he might come in or out of it; not to speak to him, not to let him recognise her.

She wore a thick veil, and he would not know her in summer clothes—her whom he had nearly always seen clad in woolly sweater and ski-ing skirt.

The taxi drew up at Clapham Junction, where there was a huge, jostling, holiday crowd, chiefly armed with enormous Japanese baskets and smutty, squealing babies. The train was packed, the babies and baskets penetrating even to the first-class carriages, and Elsa, sitting wedged, hot and miserable, in a corner, bitterly regretted not having taxied all the way, indeed, almost regretted having come at all.

"Probably he's gone away, and even if he hasn't I'll very likely never see him. How I despise myself—and yet I must, I must!"

Corbham at last!

Thankfully she left the crowded carriage and made her way out of the station. Letting down her veil, she walked slowly up the baking, dusty High Street, and turned once again into the little side road. The White Cottage was on the shady side. It looked cool and inviting; the windows stood wide open as if it were occupied.

Elsa grew red with shame now that she was really outside his house, and she walked rapidly past it and straight on to the end of the road. Here the houses were smaller, dwindling at last to a row of little red brick villas with a tiny strip of garden in front of each. Beyond the last of these there was a wide space of grass on the left, rising to a low tree-crowned hill, and indicated by a notice-board to be "Corbham Green."

Under the trees some wooden seats invited rest. Elsa felt suddenly very tired and as if her legs would not carry her back to the White Cottage. She climbed the hill wearily and sat down thankfully on a seat. The shady trees and the grass were cool and restful after the dust and glare of the streets and train.

As she sat there her mind went back over the past six months, such empty, frivolous months, in spite of the gaieties of the last three, into which she had thrown herself feverishly, in the vain endeavour to fill the void in her life that had loomed so large ever since her return from Montana in January.

What was the good of it all?

What was the end of all her efforts?

Only that she sat alone, weary and miserable, on Corbham Green on a blazing July afternoon.

The shrill screaming of a child broke in on her thoughts, and from the hill she watched a little comedy in the garden of one of the cottages below her. A small child had fallen off the gate on which he had been swinging, and his screams brought his mother rushing out anxiously to him. When she discovered he was not hurt—after the usual fashion of those whose anxiety is turned to annoyance with the cause of it—she fell to spanking him severely. Through the summer air her voice rose to Elsa, watching uninterestedly from her hill.

"You're a *very naughty* boy, Leslie, always doing what you're told not to!"

"Are all the babies in the world called Leslie?" Elsa thought wearily. She looked at her watch, saw it was half-past three, and rose and descended the hill again. The erring Leslie, forgetful of his recent trouble, was gaily swinging on his gate again as she passed.

"Mind you don't fall off, dear," said Elsa kindly to him, and he raised wide baby-blue eyes to her face. Elsa gasped. Surely, surely, this was the baby she had seen in the pram that fateful January morning?

"What's your name, dear?" she asked a trifle breathlessly.

"Leslie Martin," the baby voice answered.

"Can I see your mother?"

Leslie Martin sighed. He was obviously bored at being interrupted in his wrong-doing, but he trotted off obediently to fetch his mother.

Elsa leant against the railings as he went. She felt rather faint. There must be some hideous mistake somewhere. She gave herself a violent shake to get rid of the faintness, and when Leslie's mother, that same fair-haired, common-looking little woman came hastily out of the cottage, she was met by a storm of questions.

"What is your name?" began Elsa. "Are you Smith or Martin? Why do you live here? Don't you live at the White Cottage? Who, oh, *who* is your husband?"

The woman's eyes grew round. She recognised Elsa, too, and, having always entertained doubts of the latter's sanity, she found them now confirmed.

"Please come in, won't you, and rest a bit," she said nervously; "the heat's very trying."

"No, no," Elsa answered in an exasperated voice, "answer, please answer me! What is your name? And why do you live here?"

"Leslie!" cried Elsa, sinking on the sofa again. "Leslie, don't speak to me like that . . . I can't bear it."
[Page 66, col. 2]

"Perhaps I'd better humour ner," thought the woman. "Well, miss," she answered, "my name's Mrs. Martin, and I live here because my husband's Mr. Smith's valet, and Mr. Smith, though very fond of Leslie here, and his godfather, too—Leslie's called after him—he wouldn't be able to do with him in the house, of course. So that's how it is. You do look bad——" She broke off, as Elsa turned suddenly very white and clutched at the railings again.

"Oh, what a fool—what a fool!" she murmured to herself.

Mrs. Martin, now thoroughly alarmed, opened the gate and half led, half supported her into the tiny kitchen and on to a chair, and gave her a glass of water.

"I'm sorry," said Elsa weakly, as the colour began to come back into her cheeks. "I've had a shock, and, perhaps, after all, the heat——"

"Yes, yes, you sit quiet, miss; you'll be better directly," advised Mrs. Martin with a confidence she was far from feeling.

"Can you tell me—is Mr. Smith at home now?" Elsa asked presently in a more natural manner.

"Yes, he is at home till the 6th. Why, you're never thinking of going yet?"

"I'm all right now, thank you." Elsa rose and walked rather shakily to the door. "Good-bye, Mrs. Martin. Get something for—for Leslie with this."

She thrust a sovereign into the astonished Mrs. Martin's hand, and left her shaking her head and murmuring pitifully:

"Poor young thing, poor young thing! But I hope she means no harm to Mr. Smith!"

V.

At about six o'clock that same evening Leslie Smith turned wearily in at his little green gate. He was a tall, athletic-looking

man of about thirty, with a strong, clean-shaven face and deep grey eyes. He walked despondently, and his whole being expressed a great depression. He was very tired and very hot. London had been unbearable, and he had been there all day on very uninteresting business.

He was sick of work, and yet he was not looking forward to his holiday in the slightest. He thought, as he climbed the last flight of steps, of his last holiday—spent at Montana—and his face grew even harder in expression than it had been before. He gave an exclamation of annoyance as his housekeeper met him at the door with the announcement that a lady was waiting for him in the study.

"Why ever did you let her in, Phœbe?"

Phœbe looked injured. She was a gaunt, forbidding-looking old woman, who had been Leslie's nurse many years ago, and she ruled him with a rod of iron, but her heart was of gold.

"She wouldn't go, sir. Been wait'ng there nearly two hours. Perhaps she's a Suffragette, sir!" suggested Phœbe cheerfully.

"Oh, bother!" said Leslie. "Let's get her done with, then," and he went into the study.

A girl in a white dress rose from his favourite Chesterfield, and raised her blue eyes to his face.

"Elsa!" said Leslie Smith slowly, unbelievingly. "Elsa—it can't be you?"

He had gone quite white, and for a moment he leant against the closed door and stared at her.

"It is me," said Elsa shakily and ungrammatically.

"What have you come for?" he asked, speaking in a slow, hard, unnatural voice. "Have you come back to torment me, and then throw me over again? Is that why you've come?"

"Leslie!" cried Elsa, sinking on the sofa again. "Leslie, don't speak to me like that; don't look at me like that! I can't bear it; I can't bear any more!"

She hid her face in her hands, and her shoulders shook convulsively. Leslie's manner changed suddenly. He crossed the room and sat down by her. His own hands were trembling as he drew hers away from her face.

"Elsa," he said quite gently, "Elsa, my—my darling, is it possible that you have come back to me? What does it all mean?"

"I thought you were married!" sobbed out Elsa.

"Married! To whom on earth?"

"To—to—Mrs. Martin!"

"Mrs. Martin!" Leslie cried. "Why ever, by all that's wonderful, to Mrs. Martin?"

"Oh, I've been such a fool!" said Elsa brokenly, and she poured out all the history of that misty January morning, of the green gate, and her encounter with Mrs. Martin and baby Leslie, and of her second meeting with them that afternoon.

Leslie Smith heard her in silence to the end; then he said gently:

"Elsa, my dearest, you were very cruel not to give me a chance to explain things."

"I didn't see how there *could* be any explanation," said Elsa tearfully. "I suppose you can't—you can't forgive me!"

His eyes, hard no longer, answered her.

"But I hope you thought I'd married beneath me," he said with his old gay smile.

Half-past six struck from the little clock on the mantelpiece, and Elsa started up.

"I must go, I shall be so late home."

"I'm coming with you," Leslie announced, rising. "That long delayed interview with Miss Mallory is coming off at last!"

"It'll be all right now that you are a Sutherfield Smith," Elsa replied, and she smiled at him through her tears.

£1,000 FOR PICTURE PUZZLES.
For full particulars see page 58.

Picture Paragraphs

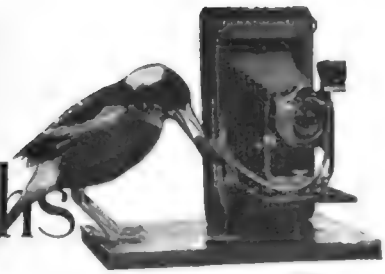


Photo B. A. Photos.

Biddy, the Australian magpie, is a most intelligent bird, and undertakes the duties of amateur photographer with the utmost assurance.

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

A DOG AND HIS DUMB-BELL.

BULLDOGS are well known to be very tenacious of purpose, and there is no obstacle which this particular dog will not face to obtain the dumb-bell, which is his favourite plaything.

This dog thinks nothing of climbing a ladder in search of his cherished dumb-bell—

This dumb-bell he found for himself, and as it was too big for his purpose, he broke it in halves by rolling it down some stone steps.

The intelligent animal refuses to be parted from his toy, and if it is taken from him will never rest content until he has run it to earth. A climb up a cask or a step-ladder are nothing to him in the pursuit of his object, and he has even been known to dive into a bucket full of water in search of the cherished dumb bell.

What would happen to anyone who dared to deprive him of his plaything is best left to the imagination.

After all, a dumb-bell is a very harmless object on which to lavish his affection, and its pursuit affords him very valuable exercise.

LOOK PLEASANT, PLEASE!

A VERY knowing bird is Biddy, the pet Australian magpie, who poses as an amateur photographer.

The scraping of plates is the signal for her appearance at the back door in quest of dainties, and her favourite diversion is to lie on her back on the lawn and play with anyone who is willing to humour her.

These magpies are splendid whistlers, and can be taught to whistle several tunes right through. They are very easily tamed, and can be trained to talk as well as a parrot, if not better.

Photos Practical Press.

—and will swarm up a big cask rather than be deprived of his plaything.

Photo Amateur.
A home-made boat which has weathered many storms on Lake Geneva.

A HOME-MADE AQUITANIA.

This fragile-looking craft has already survived two months of stormy weather on Lake Geneva, where storms are apt to arise very suddenly. It is really quite solidly built and capable of carrying three or four persons, and with the wind can attain quite a creditable speed.

DINING IN A FIREBOX.

Twenty employees of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway recently had the novel experience of dining in one of the huge fireboxes constructed for a locomotive burning anthracite coal.

The firebox is made up of fifteen channel-shaped sections; its dimensions are 13 ft. 2 in. in length, 8 ft. 8 in. in width, and 5 ft. 1 in. in height at the centre.

THE LARGEST LOCOMOTIVE.

The record in locomotives, both as regards size and power, is at present held by a new engine just completed for the Erie Railroad, in America. This engine has been specially designed for pusher service in operating steep grades on the Susquehanna division, and is the first engine to have driving-wheels under its tender. Another notable feature of the design is that the cylinders are all of the same size.

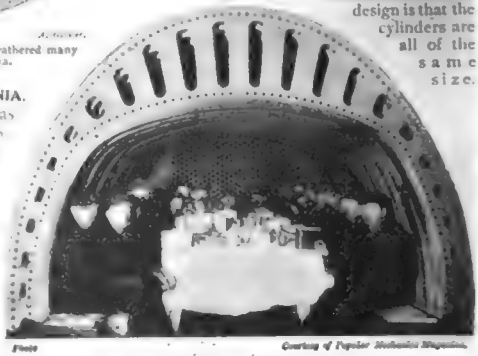


Photo Courtesy of Popular Mechanics Magazine.
Some employees of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway dining in a firebox specially designed for a locomotive burning anthracite coal.

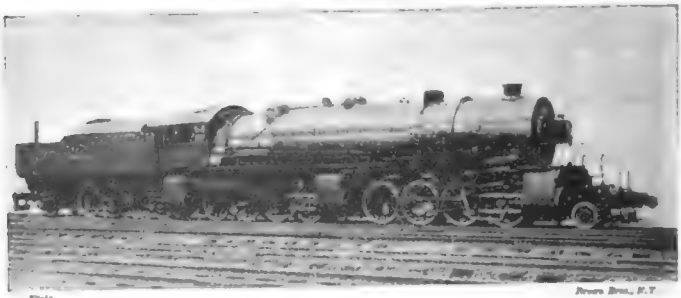


Photo Brown Bros., N.Y.
The largest locomotive now in existence hails from America; it is the property of the Erie Railroad, and was specially designed for steep grade work.

The smoke ring which immediately follows the issuing of the projectile, and obscures the muzzle of the gun.

The smoke ring at a later stage, with the projectile still hidden by the smoke.

PHOTOGRAPHING SHELLS IN FLIGHT.

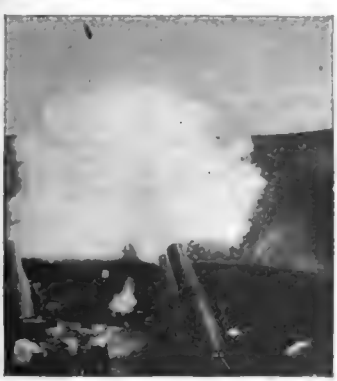
A Wonderful Invention that Makes Possible Negatives Taken in One Five-Thousandth of a Second.

Through a wonderful invention which solves the problem of the highest of high speed photography, it has been found possible to photograph shells while in actual flight. Through this means the Army expects to solve many problems of ordnance which hitherto have remained secrets.

The camera used for this purpose differs from the ordinary ones in two respects—its size and its shutter. It is almost four feet in height, and is equipped with the finest two-inch lens. The shutter is worked by an electric motor that makes several thousand revolutions a minute, and as the speed of the motor is capable of accurate adjustment, the operator can calculate the exact length of the exposure up to one five-thousandth of a second.

The formation of the deadly "smoke ring" which follows the issuing of the projectile is also clearly shown by means of this camera. The ring of gaseous smoke can be seen, obscuring the muzzle of the gun, and rising rapidly upward, almost before the shell appears.

With this unique camera views of mortar shells in all positions up to the time when they ceased their upward flight and started to descend have been obtained.



Here the projectile has issued from the smoke, and is seen travelling at the rate of 800 miles an hour.

Army officials hope with the aid of this camera to discover exactly what the modern high-power shell does when it ploughs its way through steel. From negatives showing pieces of a shell one five-thousandth of a second after it has burst, it may be possible to find a way to make steel stronger by remedying defects in the hardening and tempering processes.

MAKING THE BEST OF LIFE

By Mr. Optimist.

The watchword of everyone just now is "service." There is work for everybody, and a little thought will soon show you the best form for your energies to take. If I can help you in any way, please write to "Mr. Optimist," THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

In these chats we have discussed all sorts of plans for Making the Best of Life. My readers and I have gone into the questions of careers and cold baths, of meals and marriage, and lots of other matters which affect our personal comfort and happiness. But now that our country is at war there is only one possible way to make the Best of Life, and that is to *Help*. The man or woman who is not helping is the most unfortunate and miserable individual that it is possible to imagine.

Fortunately thee are not many such people about. I have only seen a couple, and they were going about with their heads hanging so low that they were obviously ashamed of themselves. At a time like the present we cannot afford to have any laggards or shirkers. We are going to win the war; we are going to win hands down. But, all the same, we are not going to make the fatal mistake of underestimating the determination and resources of our opponents. To despise the enemy is the silliest of all things. The German military despised our British soldiers. As a result, their whole plan of campaign in Northern France broke down, and they paid for their folly with a terrible toll of human lives.

DO YOUR PART.

Let us face the situation squarely. We are at death grips with a nation of 65 million determined people. While we have been amusing ourselves the German nation has been steadily and unitedly getting ready to deliver the mortal blow.

The Britisher loves to play, and when he plays he looks harmless enough with all his good humour and boyish enjoyment of the game. But stir him up to fight, and he has a bull-dog grip which hangs on until his adversary's last breath has fluttered out. Drake knew this when he decided to finish his game of bowls.

Let us not, therefore, be deluded into the idea that this war will be other than a protracted and bitter struggle. If the large majority of Germans prefer to sacrifice their lives rather than consent to the loss of their fleet and colonies and the shattering of their every hope, then the task that lies ahead is one that will test the full quality of our mettle. It is abundantly clear that we must each and all do our part if success is to be ours. I want to feel sure that amongst the many thousands of my readers there is not one who is not doing his or her utmost. How can each one of us make sure that he is doing his best, that he is directing his energies along the most useful channels? Well, here are some suggestions.

Every unmarried man of military age and good physique should offer his services to his country.

HOW YOU CAN HELP.

In the first place it is the obvious duty of every unmarried man of military age and good physique to offer his services to his King and Country. Is there any young man worthy to share the glory of our soldiers in France who has not yet stepped

forward? Let him do so, or for ever hang his head.

For the rest of us, who on account of sex, age, or for some other reason, cannot join the ranks of our brave comrades in the fighting line, there is, none the less, plenty to do to help our country. It is our duty to make sacrifices to liberate others who are able and willing to fight—valuable employees, personal friends, our sons, our brothers, our sweethearts. Our Country is calling them to offer their lives. We must let them go, make the going easy for them, and give them to understand how proud we are of their patriotism and devotion to the flag.

The good needlewoman will find many outlets for her energy.

There are many other ways in which those who stay at home must help. Do not forget the dependents of those who have gone. Seek out in your neighbourhood the families of the men at the front, and if there is aught you can do to help and comfort them, it is your sacred duty to do it.

Do not forget the refugees from the countries of our brave allies—the women and children homeless and crushed down under the iron heel of our ruthless adversary. Let us render them such aid as we can in their desperate plight.

BE PREPARED.

I have a word to say to the men who on account of age or responsibility have not yet been called.

Be prepared. Do not waste these months of waiting when at any time the call may come. It is the imperative business of every man who stays behind and who is not infirm, to get physically fit.

Take long walks. Practise marching instead of loafing about on Sunday, reading the latest novel. Get out for a long, healthy tramp in the open country. Practise rifle shooting at the nearest range. Sleep close to an open window, or, better still, in a tent in the garden, if you have one.

Get every nerve and muscle into such trim that if in the ebb and flow of battle there come a time when your country needs *you*, you will be ready to play your part at once, and play it *like a man*, as you would wish.

Every now and then we hear the suggestion or the hope that peace may very soon be signed. But how can we sign peace or make treaties, in the commonly accepted sense of the terms, with a nation which regards a scrap of paper having the guarantee of its signature as a thing of absolutely no account?

Even those men who are forced to stay at home can make themselves proficient shots.

A FIGHT TO A FINISH.

This is a fight to a finish. We must fight on until we are absolute masters of the Germans, until we have crushed them to the point when they are incapable of doing further damage. And in order to do this we must also wage war on German trade. The sign "Made in Germany" must be banished from our shops and our houses. We don't want goods of cheap, German manufacture. How often after buying them have we wished we had saved our time and tempers by getting the well-made British article? Remember that a part of every pound spent on German goods has been used towards building a fleet to destroy us.

Don't forget to contribute to one of the relief funds.

SEIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITY.

There is no getting away from the fact that during the past decade or so we have been a bit slack. We have allowed the Germans to filch away great slices of our world commerce with hardly so much as a protest. But we are thoroughly awake now. This war gives us our great opportunity. That every reader of the ROYAL will do his or her part, and do it bravely, is the sincere wish of

Mr. Optimist

"ENGLAND EXPECTS—"

"There's never a flood goes shoreward now
But lifts a keel we manned;
There's never an ebb goes seaward now
But drops our dead on the sand."

By Agnes Herbert.

I.

"Unload!"

The voice of the gunner's mate broke against the cliffs, and the echoes catching it up bandied the order from cleft to cleft carefully, until it died away in eerie whispers between the crannies.

The boys—some of them mere children—turned half right and broke their pistols open. The ejectors threw out the empties, and each youth passed his pistol to his left hand and faced to the front again.

"Ground pistols!"

With mechanical precision each lad placed his weapon on the grass.

"On your targets—march."

From the high plateau the rocky slopes of one of the most beautiful of the Isles of Greece curved abruptly down to the deep purple-blue edge of the sea, and trailed off into ghosts of shores to the west. A little winding riband, intensely blue, marked the horizon. Close in shore a British cruiser lay heavily.

"My outfitter's lost his nerve!" growled the Gunnery-Lieutenant, lighting a cigarette from the smouldering stump of his last. "Blowed if he hasn't sent in his account."

"It's a stunt," said the Sub., "a beastly stunt. My banker's lost *his* nerve. Called my attention to the fact that I'm overdrawn to the extent of a measly twenty Jimmy o' goblins—the blighter! But what's the odds—out here!"

Five bells!

The metallic sound drifted from shore to shore and repeated itself in the rocks behind.

"Another hour of it! How keen those youngsters are, keen as mustard! Look at 'em examining the patches on the targets as the shot holes are pasted up after the scorer. They want the figures and they want the holes as reminders. They'd be firing their pistols continuously if the weapons and the instructor would let 'em."

"I haven't had time to sort them out yet," said the Sub. "Can't tell t'other from which. I only joined at Gib., you know."

"Of course—I forgot. They're a good crowd, with one or two promising boys among 'em. See that big lad to the left—he's Manx, born and bred by the sea. I'm from the island myself. In proportion to its population the Isle of Man has furnished a larger number of men to the Service than any other part of the Empire. I'd have you know *that*, Sub. He's a curious boy, absolutely soaked in naval tradition, honour and glory, and all that. The lid of his ditty-box isn't adorned by a photograph of the usual young woman wilting over the usual cardboard fence, but has the famous signal

cut into the wood and coloured. 'England expects. . . .' with the 't' and the 's' in 'expects' left out. Not because the lad can't spell, but because there wasn't any more lid. They call him 'Nelson' aboard. He has the makings of a fine seaman in him, that youngster, if he keeps straight."

Throwing away his cigarette, the Gunnery-Lieutenant crossed the firing-point, which was indicated by a line of glittering quartz-filled stones, and walked up to the squad grouped about the cardboard targets.

"What's this—only four holes? Where are the other two shots?"

"Still going, sir!" said the gunner's mate, smiling broadly.

"Warn these boys again about opening out their pistols, Jenkins. They don't turn sufficiently to the right, so that the muzzles point down the range and not at the next youngster in the line."

"Some of them's very backward, sir. Their brains is in their boots. I'm hoping they'll pick it up in the resume."

"Fall in the class!" said the Gunnery-Lieutenant briskly.

The gunner's mate repeated, and all the echoes took it up. "Fall in the class! Fall in the class! Fall in the cl—ass!"

Standing in front of his squad, the instructor explained the orders afresh, and demonstrated how they were to be carried out.

At that moment the accident happened . . . and the bullet, whizzing through the obliquely-held muzzle, found a billet in "Nelson."

When he said "Load!" he intended that the pistols should be taken from the pouch with the right hand and passed to the left, the pistol to be first opened out. Had they no savvy? He was inclined to doubt it. Hanged if he knew what hard fate had sent him to teach such a lot of wool-gathering monkeys.

If any boy felt abashed it was not "Nelson." He had made two "bulls" and four "inners" in the last round, and the instructor had beamed upon him.

"Load!"

Each lad took his pistol from his pouch

and going through the evolutions laid down by the watchful gunner's mate, placed six rounds in the cylinder.

"Ready!"

They cocked the hammers briskly, and, eyes on the targets, passed the pistols back to ready right hands.

"Commence!"

Not for nothing had the gunner's mate warned the youngsters never to place the firing finger on the trigger until the order was given, and to remove it after firing a round. They all remembered. The Sub. said he could see them remembering—they remembered so laboriously.

The six rounds completed, the class turned half right to break open the pistols once more.

And at that moment the accident happened.

Suddenly Number Two from the end of the line let off his pistol as he held it for opening, and the bullet, whizzing through the obliquely-held muzzle, found a billet in "Nelson," who was doing the duty England expected of him, and doing it very well.

"He couldn't have fired six rounds!" groaned the gunner's mate. "Must have had one left in the cylinder."

And that was the last thing "Nelson" heard as he dropped on the grass.

His rambling course was run and yet he rambled still. Now he was walking up the gorse-grown road to the Coastguard station—the road he would never take again; next he was splicing ropes in the training-ship, "the wire ones, *you* know, the seamen instructors are tremenjous for them." Now and again he listened to all his father had to tell him of "the Service."

"England expects!" he said quite clearly. "I'll not forget, Dad."

II.

"They're telling me I'm scuppered, Doc., and if it's true, I'm wantin' to see the Captain. Will you tell the Surgeon I'm wantin' to see the Captain?"

"You're not be'ind'and with your wants, you're not!" said the sick-berth attendant sarcastically. "Is there hanyone helse has you'd like to hinterview—the Hadmiral of the Fleet, supposin' 'e was 'ere, which 'e hain't. Just mention hit. Hanythink to oblige a hinvalid."

"I'm not rottin', Doc." The boy spoke faintly. "I'm not, really. I'm wantin' to see the Old Man most particular—nobody else but him'll do."

"All right, all right, matey, seein' as 'ow you're wounded I'll take the message. But I 'olds out no 'opes. The skipper 'e don't do no district visiting, and that's all there h s to it."

That was all there was to it, indeed, for Captain Tremerton was an officer with a great idea of his own importance in the scheme of naval things generally. He made it a rule never to give an order to a seaman personally He had never done such a thing since he had reached his exalted rank, and, carrying the idea to an astounding length, forbade his officers doing so either. Every command had to filter through a superior to a petty-officer, who saw to its delivery. He always used the royal and editorial "we," and "Your Captain thinks this," and "Your Captain thinks that."

"The Fleet-Surgeon to see you, sir," said the sentry at the door of the Captain's after-cabin.

"What's this, what's this? We are busy. We consider you out of your time, Morrison."

Just for a moment the amiable Fleet-Surgeon wished himself an Admiral, that he might call this irritating method of conducting a conversation by the name best suited to it. Walking briskly across the seaweed patterned carpet, he ranged alongside the Captain's desk.

"I have to report, sir, that Boy Ambrose Cretney is dying. I give him about an hour to live—not more. He wishes to see you."

"To see us—what can the lad have to say to his Captain? Tell the First-Lieutenant to take down the message and bring it to us."

"No, sir," returned the Fleet-Surgeon firmly, "he wishes to see you, and nobody else will do. I've promised you'll come along. He's a brave youngster. Asked me to tell him his chances, and when I said he hadn't any he took the blow like a man."

"He's anxious to excuse the boy who shot him, eh, Morrison? Can't you let him know that we understand the whole thing was a mistake? The boy who let off his pistol so carelessly is merely under temporary arrest."

"I've explained all that, sir, and it doesn't satisfy him. I've promised the lad to bring you back with me to the sick-bay."

"Well, well," said the Captain testily, pulling down the lid of his desk with a crash, "if we must come we must."

The Fleet-Surgeon opened the door of the sick-bay gently. Inside there was a great hush as though everyone slept, and around a cot in the far corner a make-shift screen

was placed. To this the sick-berth attendant ostentatiously guided the Captain.

"Well, my lad, what can your Captain do for you? He's sorry for this, very sorry. Blanked unfortunate!"

"It is, sir, that it is." The boy's voice was full and strong. Was it possible that another hour would quieten it for ever? That was what the Fleet-Surgeon had said. "I give him an hour."

"I'd made up my mind to be a credit to the Service, sir," the lad went on, "same as my father—a boatswain's mate, sir, served forty years. 'You've got to live like a sailor, and die like a sailor and be buried like a sailor, Ambrose,' he said, that's what he said, sir. Which is why I axed to see you. None of your land buryings for me! I hates a civilian funeral. I axes you to take me to sea, sir, and drop me overboard."

"Well, my lad, what can your Captain do for you?" . . . "I axes you to take me to sea, sir, and drop me overboard."

It sounded very melodramatic to Captain Tremerton. He wondered if he ought to temporise politely—it was the obvious thing, surely, to pretend that matters weren't so bad after all, that the patient would be better in the morning, but a curious something at the back of the boy's burning eyes checked him.

"The fires are out, Cretney—the ship's here for a fortnight." He spoke jerkily. It was rather awkward to refuse anything to a boy who had only an hour to live. "We're sorry, my lad. But it's all the same, you know, wherever and however one is buried provided that one meets death as you are doing. You wouldn't have a civilian funeral, either. You are not a civilian. You shall have a sailor's funeral ashore, firing-party and mourners and all the rest of it."

The boy did not speak again. He lay with his eyes on Captain Tremerton's, and they were more eloquent than a thousand words.

The Captain turned away, feeling vaguely

embarrassed. He did not like feeling embarrassed. Why should he be made to feel embarrassed?

He closed the door of the sick-bay quietly, and looked ahead down the sun-lit mess-deck. It was strange—but wherever his eyes fell they met two others, asking, beseeching, begging, praying. Over the water—the haunting eyes; in his cabin—the haunting eyes.

He tried to write but they were always there, and little by little they irked him.

Dinner was a farce—he ate nothing, and half-way through the meal he ordered the sentry to inquire if Boy Cretney was still alive. Yes, just alive, hardly conscious, and he had not spoken once since the Captain left him.

For five minutes Captain Tremerton sat playing with an orange, and then he pressed the bell purposefully.

"Ask the Engineer-Commander and the First-Lieutenant to come to us at once."

"Very good, sir."

He waited with his hands over his eyes, that he might shut out the haunting memory of those others, until a knock at the after-cabin door disturbed him.

"We're taking the ship to sea, Engineer-Commander," said the Captain, in his best "no questions, please," tone. "How long before you can raise steam?"

"Six hours, sir."

"Then be ready for seven to-morrow morning. First-Lieutenant, we sail at seven. If you've any liberty men ashore, warn them."

"What's the matter with the old man?" queried the Engineer-Commander wonderingly, as he stepped out of the after-cabin. "Ship going to sea—whatever for? I was told to draw fires for a fortnight's stay. What does he mean at all?"

"Don't suppose he knows himself," answered the First-Lieutenant uninterestedly. "I've never been shipmates with such a quaint bird before."

As they turned into the wardroom the Captain passed for'ard along the mess-deck. He did not notice them—his thoughts were elsewhere, and beat themselves out to the sharp sound of his steps. "Would-he-be-in-time! Would-he-be-in-time! Would-he-be-in-time!"

He opened the door of the sick-bay with a nervous quickness, and was within almost before the attendant, lounging against the casemate, saw who the visitor was.

"Cretney?" said the Captain.

"Dead, sir, about a second," replied the sick-berth attendant offhandedly, as though the event was too unimportant to be of much account.

Pulling back the screen set round the cot in the corner, the Captain got behind it and dragged the folds into place again.

The boy lay as though asleep. His eyes—those unforgettable eyes—were closed. It was too late—he would never know!

And then the Captain did a curious thing. Leaning over the cot, he whispered something into the lad's ear, a message so electric that for a moment it halted the wanderer on the path leading to the silent valley.

"The ship's going to sea!"

The glazing eyes opened wide—wide. They besought no longer—the piteous pleading of them was gone. They were the eyes of a conqueror.

THE POET'S LAMENT.

The merry summer days are past;
Once more the winter's here,
And loudly roars the bitter blast;
The world is bleak and drear.
Jack Frost adorns my window-pane—
The rime's returned again.

My hopes have vanished with the sun,
My dreams of fame are o'er;
The mags. refuse them, one by one—
Oh, I will write no more!
Yes, here they are—those scribblings vain—
My rhymes—returned again!

Elsie Skeet.

VAP & BELLS

UPHOLDING HIS RANK.

As a magnificent vessel, one of the great South African liners, was steaming into Southampton harbour, a grimy coal lighter floated immediately in front of it. An officer on board the vessel, observing this, shouted: "Clear out of the way with that barge."

The lighterman, a native of the Emerald Isle, shouted in reply: "Are ye captain of that vessel?"

"No," answered the officer.

"Then spake to yer aiquals," said Pat; "I'm the captain of this one."

* * * * *

A QUESTION OF QUALITY.

A prominent politician gave an address upon the life of a statesman before a school. When he had finished he said: "Now, can any of you tell me what a statesman is?"

A little hand went up and a small girl replied: "A statesman is a man who makes speeches."

"Hardly that," said the politician. "For instance, I make speeches, and yet I am not a statesman."

The little hand again went up, and the answer came triumphantly: "I know; a statesman is a man who makes *good* speeches."

* * * * *

CAUSE FOR BLOWS.

One day a Scottish boy and an English boy, who were fighting, were separated by their respective mothers with difficulty, the Scottish boy, though the smaller, being far the more pugnacious.

"What garred ye fecht a big laddie like that for?" said the mother.

"And I'll fight him again," said the boy, "if he says Scotsmen wear kilts because their feet are too big to get into their trousers."

* *

HE FELT UNWORTHY.

"Don't you like the necktie I gave you?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. "It's a perfectly beautiful necktie. I feel selfish when I think of wearing it. I wish you'd add a couple more to it and make yourself a nice new dress."

WHAT A FORTUNATE BEGGAR!

BEGGAR: "Kind sir, I have a wife and ten children, and——"

BROWN: "You're lucky! See how much you save on your income tax! I haven't a single kid!"

* * * * *

A DISTINGUISHING MARK.

A youth of the "nut" species was exhibiting some photographs to a charming society girl, with whom he was very much in love.

"This one," he said, handing her a picture, "is my photo with my two French poodles. Can you recognise me?"

"Why, yes, I think so," replied the young woman, looking intently at the picture. "You are the one with the hat on, are you not?"

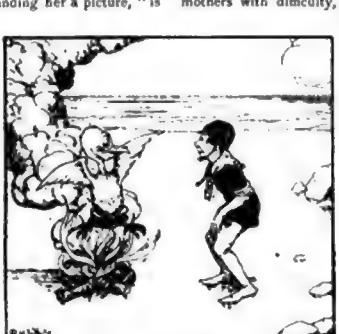
* *

RIGHTEOUS ANNOYANCE.

VISITOR (at the National Gallery): "Why, them's the very same pictures I saw here the day before yesterday."

ATTENDANT (dryly): "Quite likely."

VISITOR: "Then the landlord where I'm staying is wrong. He told me that the pictures were changed daily in all the leadin' picture houses."



SHIPWRECKED MARINER (who, with great difficulty has caught a bird and lit a fire): "Oh, lor! the wretched bird's a Phœnix!"

WIDOWED BY HER OWN HAND.

The Tale of a Cooking Calamity.

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY.

A shy young man had been calling on the sweetest girl in the world for many months, but being bashful, his suit progressed slowly. Finally she decided it was up to her to start something, so the next time he called she pointed to the rose in his buttonhole and said: "I'll give you a kiss for that rose."

A crimson flush overspread his countenance, but the exchange was made. Then he grabbed his hat and started to leave the room.

"Why, where are you going?" she asked in surprise.

"To the—er—florist for more roses," he called from the front door

• • •

A COME DOWN.

Sam had worked on the farm for nine years, and until his master took to poultry farming he was quite satisfied with life.

But this poultry business was a bit too much. He had to take the eggs as they were laid and write the date on them with an indelible pencil. And, worse than that, he had also to write on the eggs the breed of the hen that laid them.

So one day he marched up to the farmer.

"I'm about fed up," said he, "and I'm going to leave!"

The farmer was astounded.

"Surely, Sam," said he, "you're not going to leave me after all these years?"

"Yes, but I am," retorted Sam. "I've done every kind of rotten job on this here farm, but I'd rather starve than go on being secretary to your old hens!"

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PROOF POSITIVE.

CORONER: "We found nothing in the man's pockets, ma'am, except three buttons, one handkerchief, and a receipted bill."

THE SOBBING INQUIRER: "A receipted bill! Then 'tain't my husband!"

GOING SLOW.

"Nurse," moaned the convalescent patient, "can't I have something to eat? I'm starving!"

"Yes, the doctor said you could start taking solids to-day, but we must begin slowly," she added as she held out a teaspoonful of tapioca. "We must only advance by degrees."

He sucked the spoon dry, and felt more tantalisingly hungry than ever. He begged for a second spoonful, but she shook her head, saying that everything at the start must be done in similar small proportions.

Presently he summoned her again to his bedside. She hurried to him and asked him what he required. "Nurse," he gasped, "bring me a postage stamp—I want to read."

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BROUGHT UP ON THE BOTTLE.

A certain doctor, who fishes for recreation, recently took a friend on such an expedition.

Early in the afternoon the doctor lost his sinker. For a moment it seemed that he was in a dilemma, and that there would be no more fishing for him that day. A happy thought, however, came to him, for he had a bottle in his pocket. This was carefully filled by the doctor with sand, corked, and sent down on its mission.

In a little while the doctor had a bite and pulled in his line at racing speed, finding a couple of fish, one on each hook.

"Ah! Twins!" shouted the friend.

"Yes," grinned the doctor, "and brought up on the bottle, too."

• • •

A FAIR OFFER.

A man who had purchased some currant buns at a baker's, was distressed, on starting to eat one, to find that it contained a fly. Returning to the shop, he made an indignant complaint, demanding another bun in place of the inhabited one.

"I'm sorry, sir," said the saleswoman, "I can't give you another, but if you will bring back the fly, I will exchange it for a currant."

LOST BALL!

A charming French lady taken to see a Rugby match for the first time was much interested in the scrummages. At last she said:

"How funny for them to lose a big ball like that."

Her friend wanted to know the meaning of that cryptic remark, and she replied, pointing to a scrum in process:

"Don't you see? There they are in a terrible muddle, trying to find the ball."

Collapse of her friend, and amusement of spectators in the neighbourhood!

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RATHER PERPLEXING.

On the bank of a small river in Ireland is a stone bearing the following inscription: "When this stone is out of sight it is not safe to ford the river." But this is surpassed by the famous post erected some years ago by the surveyors of an English road. It reads: "This is the bridle path to Faversham. If you can't read this you had better keep to the main road."

• • • • •

WHAT HE FOUND.

"Brown's an inquisitive chap. Coming home from the club last night, he climbed up a high gate-post to see what the sign was at the top."

"What was it?"

"Wet paint."

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THE REASON.

CUSTOMER: "Waiter, this is the first tender steak I've ever had in your shop."

WAITER: "My goodness! You must have got the guvnor's."

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A DOWNFALL.

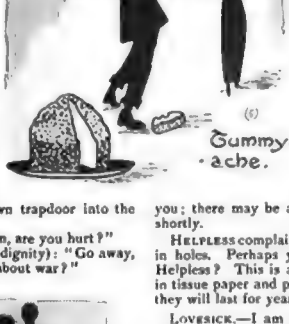
GROCER (who had lately joined the Army, practising in his shop): "Right, left, right, left, four paces to the rear; march!"—(falls down trapdoor into the cellar).

WIFE (anxiously): "Oh, Jim, are you hurt?"

GROCER (savagely, but with dignity): "Go away, woman. What do you know about war?"

THE EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

CURLYLOCKS.—I am sorry to hear that your hair is falling out. There is no certain method of preventing it, but you might try a weak solution of gum and water. Drawing-pins are not to be recommended, though they have their points.



WEDDING GUEST.—It is immaterial which you throw at the bride—rice or confetti. No, it is not usual to boil the rice first. If you have no white satin slippers to throw, use one of your husband's boots—a hobnailed one will have the most striking effect.

KANTKOOK.—It is not unusual for vegetable marrow to get wet during the process of boiling. To get rid of the moisture, wring each piece out in a dry towel, and serve on blotting paper.

HEARTHSTONE.—I am sorry that your gingerbread was not a success. I should advise you to keep it by you; there may be a scarcity of building material shortly.

HELPLESS complains that her stockings are always in holes. Perhaps you have been wearing them, Helpless? This is a great mistake. Roll them up in tissue paper and put them away in a drawer, and they will last for years.

LOVESICK.—I am afraid the fact that the young man gave you a peppermint with "I love you" on it is not sufficient foundation for a breach of promise case. The fact that you swallowed the peppermint would be greatly against you, since, for obvious reasons, you could not produce it. You say also that he took you into supper at a dance and risked life and limb to get you an ice. You must remember that we are a nation of heroes, and I do not think an ice can be regarded as a very warm proof of affection.

CHILLY.—If you suffer from cold feet, try baking them in the oven with a dab of butter on each and a dash of cayenne. The herrings should certainly wear bedsocks.—(Another printer's error! Sort it out for yourself).

GOOD AT DIRECTING.

His *Fiancée*: "You told me you were a director of this railway line, and here I find you in a uniform doing porter's work."

The Official: "So I am a director. Just wait a little while and you'll see me directing the passengers to their trains."

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A SWEEPING STATEMENT.

One day Smith and Jones were looking at a picture and admiring its wonderful realism.

"It makes me think of an artist that I once heard of," reflectively remarked Smith. "It is said that he painted cobwebs on the ceiling so truthfully that the servant girl wore herself into an attack of nervous prostration trying to sweep them down."

"He did?" responded Jones, as his face broke into a smile.

"Yes," declared the other with a hurt expression. "You speak as if you doubt it."

"Well," returned Jones, "there may have been such an artist, but there never was such a servant girl."

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THE WEAK SPOT.

A woman, wearing an anxious expression, called at an insurance office one morning.

"I understand," she said, "that for £1 I can insure my house for £200 in your company?"

"Yes," replied the agent. "that is right. If your house burns down we pay you £200."

"And," continued the woman anxiously, "do you make any inquiries as to the origin of the fire?"

"Certainly," was the prompt reply; "we make the most careful inquiries, madam."

"Oh!"—and she turned to leave the office—"I thought there was a catch in it somewhere."

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FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS.

"Hi!" yelled the carpenter wrathfully at his new assistant, "didn't I tell you to notice when the glue boiled over?"

"Yes, sir, and I did," responded the youth; "it was exactly a quarter past ten."

EXCELLENT FLAVOUR!

Talking about a shortage of food at one period during his last expedition, a well-known explorer tells an amusing story of one of his companions. On his return to England his bootmaker met him, and asked:

"How did you find those boots I made for you?"

"Best I ever tasted," was the prompt reply.

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MAKING AN IMPRESSION.

A kind-hearted and witty clergyman, entering the house of one of his elders one morning, found the good old man unmercifully whipping one of his sons, a lad about fourteen years old, and he at once began to intercede for the boy.

The deacon defended himself by saying that the youth must be early trained in the way he should go. "It is best to make an impression when the wax is soft," he said.

"Yes," said the pastor, "but that does not hold here, for the whacks were not soft."

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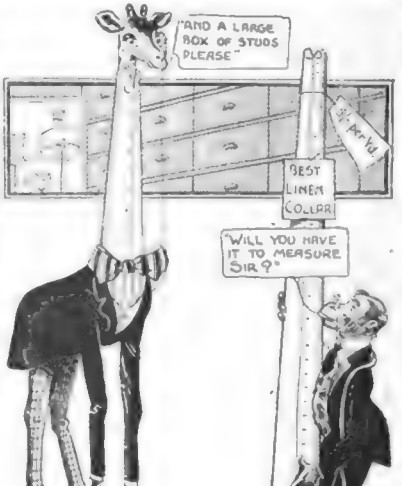

SHOPKEEPER (to himself): "By jove! This is the chap I like selling collars to!"

NOT A PASSENGER.

An old farmer, intending to go for a drive, ordered his man to get the trap out. When ready, he said to his little niece:

"Tiny, go and see if the horse is in the trap."

Tiny went.

"No, uncle," she said on her return, "the horse is not in the trap, but he's standing between two poles close to it!"

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THE GAS BILL AGAIN!

A provincial municipal candidate was praising the gas department, and, hoping to please the electors with a little humour, he said his policy was "Honour the Light Brigade."

"Yes," came the voice of an indignant consumer, "but think of the charge they made!"

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WAS SHE REFUSING HIM?

Phyllis: "I will marry you on one condition."

Phillip: "And what is that?"

Phyllis: "That our marriage shall not be allowed to interrupt our friendship."

PITY THE POOR GUARD!

With a wild screech the express started from London on its northward journey, first stop Finsbury Park.

The little old lady with the bird-cage hailed the guard excitedly.

"Is this York?" she asked.

"No, madam," replied the guard politely.

With each stop the old lady got more excited, and the guard got less polite.

At last it really was York. The guard, thinking his troubles were at an end, came to her.

"This is York, madam," he announced, opening the carriage door and preparing to help her.

"Thank you—oh, thank you!" she beamed. "I have to change the canary's water here. Will you kindly get that little cup filled for me my good man?"

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AN EXCUSE NECESSARY.

HE: "People are saying you married me for my money!"

SHE: "Well, I had to give them some reason."

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INHERITED TALENT.

FRIEND: "Your daughter has a fine touch, Mrs. Patrick."

MRS. PATRICK: "Yes, so they do be telling me; an' sure, 'tis no wonder, for she loves the pianny, and niver tires of it. She has a great taste for moosic, but, then, that's only natural, for her gran'father had his head broken wid a cornet at a picnic."

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GAINING EXPERIENCE.

LADY OF THE HOUSE: "Why, you were here two weeks ago looking for a place as cook! Have you been out of a situation ever since?"

COOK: "No, mum. Sure, an' I've had three places since thin."

A Trunk Call.

NOT THE ONLY ONE.

MR. SHORT: "Did you ever realise anything on that investment?"

MR. LONG: "Oh, yes."

MR. SHORT: "What did you realise on it?"

MR. LONG: "What a fool I had been."

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A DESERVED REWARD.

FRANKIE (after listening breathlessly to the story of William Tell): "And was the little boy allowed to eat the apple afterwards?"

TURNING OUT A "TOMMY"

By Edgar Wallace.

Only second in interest to the men who are fighting for their country are the men who are being trained to fight. The following article gives a vivid account of the life and training of the recruits. The author is a firm believer in the value of military training; he has spent seven years in the Army, and he knows.

The King needs young men to serve him. He wants to make them *fit* for active service. He wants to train them so that if, by an unthinkable series of disasters, we find ourselves fighting for our national existence, he can raise his finger and beckon to his colours trained, self-reliant men with the traditions of some proud regiment their traditions—men physically fit to do battle for their homes and their women-kind.

When I was a boy of seventeen I was a weed. I was drifting aimlessly along the road which leads to thirty-five shillings a week and a clerkship. I reckoned I was a cut above wearing a red coat. I valued my freedom—in other words, I hated discipline. And I found that I had no freedom. I had no officer to order me here and there, but I had a hollow-chested, hock-bottle-shouldered senior clerk, who talked to me as though he owned me body and soul.

And in a moment of inspiration I joined the army.

I served for seven years, and I've never ceased to thank God that I did so intelligent a thing. I found a new caste—a new and splendid friendship. Seven years in the army made me a man—lifted me out of the rut—took me away from the miserable pettiness of life. It led me to new and wonderful lands; it gave me a sense of authority and self-assurance.

It gave me pocket-money, schooling, comforts, and admitted me to the glorious Freemasonry of soldiering.

Seven years I served in England and in Africa. I have lived with the army, starved with the army, and nearly died with the army.

My chums were all men like you—chaps you meet who are neither one thing nor the other till the army collars them and dresses them into shape.

Most young men have one fear about joining. They are shy of being new chums; they don't like the idea of appearing as awkward novices. But to-day there are thousands

of youngsters all new to the game. They are all recruits together.

Some mothers—especially middle-class mothers—think that the life is too rough, that the class of man you meet is too coarse for their tenderly nurtured sons. That isn't true. Nothing is too rough for healthy youth as long as it is clean and decent. Providing beds are comfortable and food is good, and the habitation of the soldier is sanitary, that is all that matters.

And as to the men, they are fine fellows—good sportsmen and the truest of friends. I was a private in the army—a private who took the rough with the smooth. I kicked over the traces and broke my leave and went to a military prison in the bad old days, and I got into all kinds of scrapes. There was nothing holy in my composition; I asked for all the trouble I got—and I got it by return of post.

The recruits who are going up now have advantages of which I did not dream. In the first place, they have a good chance of seeing active service—which the average soldier spends his life without seeing. They are not going into barracks, because barracks are pretty well occupied in one way and the other. A few of them will go under canvas, but the majority are being billeted—that is to say, little parties of them are lodging with private families in the neighbourhood of headquarters.

Their training is different to what it is in normal times. They are learning the essentials, and they are working hard to learn. They are learning to march, to shoot, to act with initiative. Ninety per cent. of recruits when the rifle is put into their hands for the first time, and they are asked the invariable question: "Why is this rifle given to you?" as invariably answer: "To defend my life."

The first big lesson the recruit learns is conveyed in the drill instructor's caustic correction: "Your life, my lad, isn't worth defending; this rifle is given to you for the destruction of the King's enemies."

Now that is the beginning and the end of a recruit's training. He is given a rifle (I refer, of course, to the infantry recruit) for the destruction of the King's enemies, and all his training is to the end of employing his weapon in the most advantageous manner. He learns to carry it and its "food" long distances, to bring his rifle from Mons to Paris and back to the German border, so to stiffen his frame that he can use his rifle with little or no fatigue, to handle his rifle smartly with the same easy, second-nature familiarity with which he handles a knife and fork, to know its idiosyncrasies and its humours, and to place himself in certain positions in wartime so that the rifle may not change proprietorship.

We are not bothering soldiers much about ceremonial. We are not jawing their heads off if all the rifles do not come up to the "slope" at the same time; yet the young soldier must master some of the ceremonial side of army life, not because he may be

The recruit's first big lesson comes with the drill instructor's caustic comment: "Your life, my lad, isn't worth defending; your rifle is given to you for the destruction of the King's enemies."

The recruit learns to dig trenches—and his back aches a bit the first day.

called upon to present arms, but because all this drill serves two purposes: it muscles up a man, and it teaches him how to hold, swing, and carry his rifle so that he may use it almost unconsciously, as a man uses a walking-stick.

The business of the recruit is to learn to march—to swing through country lanes with that fine swing of shoulder, that swanky little hunch which only the British soldier understands.

He must learn to shoot, so to train his eye and brain that when eye says "backsight—foresight and enemy all in line," brain will say to finger—"Press gently—don't pull as if you were drawing beer, but press firmly—*so*."

He must learn to be independent and yet one of a whole at the same time, to attack and defend in open order where everything is up to him, but he is conscious of supreme direction, and is ready to obey that superiority.

Open order fighting takes two or three years to learn, but if he gives his mind to it, he will learn it in two—battles

The new recruit goes to gym. as a matter of course. It does him all the good in the world. He learns to dig trenches—and his back aches a bit the first day, his hand is blistered the second, but on the third he wonders what there is in it that is so difficult. All the time the "Kitchenarios"—that is what the men at the front call the new army—are at work—good soldier's work. There is no room for a slacker in Kitchener's army.

He has to get up with the lark, and be on parade after a hasty mug of coffee and a snatch of bread-and-butter for the early morning drill. He goes off to breakfast—then drill again.

More than half the horror of the average recruit's existence lies in the cleaning of his spotless white "straps," and the polishing, pipeclaying, brushing, and burnishing for commanding officer's parade. It must be confessed that whilst the "Kitchenario" has to keep his body speckless, he hasn't much to do in the way of fancy work on his clothes.

One thing, however, he must learn—and

He has to get up with the lark, for there is no room for a slacker in Kitchener's Army.

that is to pack his kit in the smallest and most compact compass. He has to carry that kit—knife, fork, spoon, lather-brush, razor, soap, towel, spare shirts, boots, bible, prayer-book, etc.—that is absolutely essential. This kit of his is the whole of his wardrobe; it is his valise, suit-case, manicure set, and cabin trunk. Everything he wants on campaign he will find there. If it isn't there, he mustn't want it.

And remember that this pack is only to enable him to live in comfort, so that he may be fit to carry and use the rifle which is placed in his hands for the destruction of the King's enemies.

The recruit slings himself into his kit, and falls in after breakfast for C.O.'s parade. He will drill again, and yet again before lunch, and after lunch (they call it dinner in the army), and he will vary his barrack-yard drill with gym., with trench digging, and with route marches, short at first, and growing gradually longer.

Oh! those gorgeous marches in October and November, when the air is keen and sweet, and there are white mists on the tired fields, and the boots ring upon the hard roads, and the very soul of man is a-chuckle with the joy of life!

A visit to one of the big camps where the recruits are being trained shows with what zest they enter into their training. It is little wonder that their military progress is so swift when the amount of work they cram into a day is considered.

Here is a day's programme:

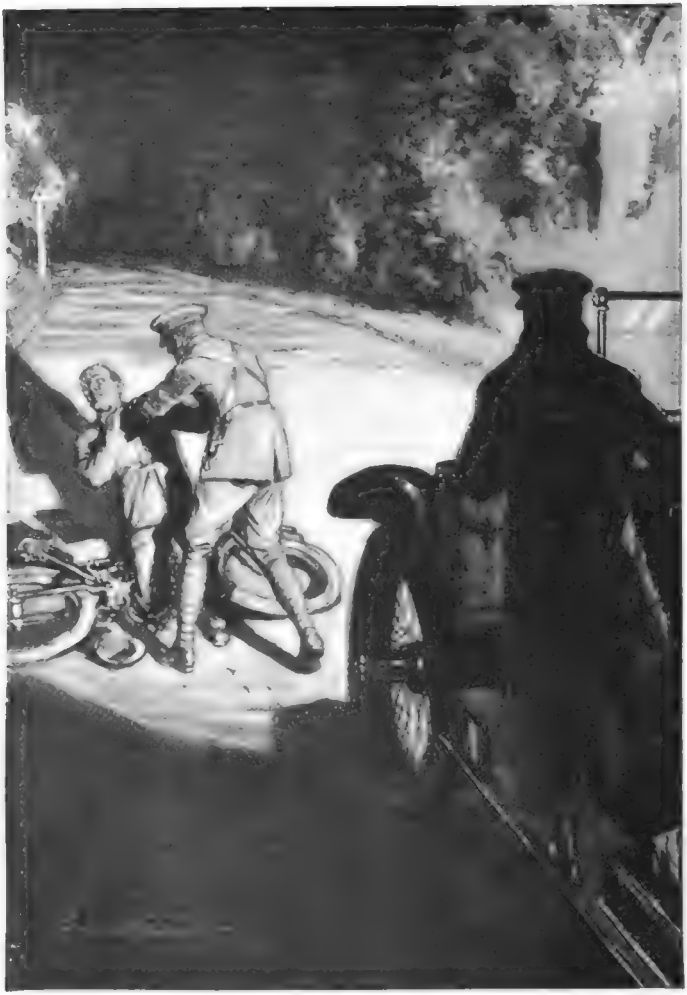
Reveille ...	5.30 a.m.	Dism'ssed...	12 noon.
Coffee and bi-cuit ...	6 "	Dinner ...	12.30 p.m
Parade ..	6.30 "	Parade ...	2 "
Breakfast ...	7.30 "	Tea ...	4.30 "
Parade ...	9 "	Leave camp	5 "
		Lights out..	10.15 "

Dinner is a great event, and the amount of roast beef, potatoes, haricot beans, and plum "duff" which is disposed of speaks volumes for the glorious health giving life which they lead. Hard work, perhaps, but, bank clerk or labourer, they all enjoy it!

Gradually, the recruit will find his slack, bent shoulders stiffen; he will find a new zest in things. He will learn how fine a thing is manhood when it is applied to the service of the State. He will welcome the end of the day when, if he is not chosen for guard (they take you in alphabetical order), he can go down to the canteen or "coffee-shop," where a piano tinkles musically and the roaring choruses of songs attest the recruit's new lung power.

Then one day will come the order, and the new battalion, a thousand strong, filled with finely-set young men who would not recognise their former selves if they met them by chance, go through the town to the waiting troop-train —to the waiting troopship. There is a swift run across Channel, with a convoy of destroyers to guard them, and then by and by they come to the Army which Knows—lean, soiled men, with untidy beards, who will watch the new soldiers, and watching, will approve.

The new soldier will welcome the end of the day, when he can go down to the canteen or "coffee-shop" and roar out popular choruses with his chums.



The Lieutenant, shouting to me to turn on the lights, dashed up the road and secured his man before he had time to extricate himself from the machine. [Page 93, col. 1.]

KING'S WORK BY NIGHT.

The Story of a Car and a Capture.

By Keble Howard.

I.

"*Please hold yourself and car in readiness night and day. You will be communicated with either by telegram or telephone.*"

These were the brief instructions I received from the military headquarters at Bennington. The word "please," I presume, was a concession to a mere volunteer.

In common with many other Englishmen, I was desperately anxious when the war broke out to get some sort of active service. Although I am a married man between thirty-five and forty years of age, and therefore not wanted by the recruiting sergeant, the fever of the war was in my veins. We all had it in those early days, and every man of my age and position, at any rate, will know what I mean.

What could I do? I could give money, I could shoot at a target, I could attend first-aid lectures, I could keep my little household—consisting of my wife, my youngest sister, and my two children, together with the married couple who form our domestic staff—as cheerful and optimistic as possible. But these things, though I did them all to the utmost of my ability, were not sufficient to allay the war-fever. The more I read of gallant actions on land and sea, the more I yearned to experience some of the thrills and adventures of warfare. I was torn between the duty of preserving my life for the sake of those dependent upon me, and the almost irresistible desire to be in the thick of the activities.

It was my wife, aided and probably instigated by my sister Zoë, who hit on the notion that I might place my car, and myself as driver, at the disposal of the commanding officer at the barracks at Bennington. The idea appealed to me enormously. I had just acquired a new car—a long, low, four-seater, very fast and silent—and I asked nothing better than to use it in the service of my country. In less than an hour from the moment that the suggestion was put forward I presented myself at the barracks, and had the good fortune to secure an interview with the commanding officer.

Colonel Gatehouse was very soldierly in his methods. He took pencil and paper and, almost without glancing up, shot at me a number of questions. For example:

"What is the make of your car?"

"When did it leave the works?"

"How far have you run her?"

"What experience have you had as a driver?"

"What do you know of mechanical repairs?"

"Are your tyres in good condition?"

"Are you on the telephone?"

"What is the highest speed you can attain on a good road?"

"How old are you?"

"Have you any family ties?"

"Is your heart sound?"

"Is your general health good?"

"Are you accustomed to the use of fire-arms?"

"Can you use a revolver?"

"Do you possess a revolver?"

"Are you willing to place yourself and your car at our absolute disposal, night or day?"

To these queries I replied in the same businesslike manner. I gave the make of my car, and informed the Colonel that it was nearly new, having done not more than one thousand miles. My experience as a driver dated back some five years; I had motored in all weathers and over all sorts of roads. I knew enough of mechanical repairs to get out of any ordinary scrape. The tyres were nearly new, of course. Yes, I was on the telephone, both downstairs and by the side of my bed. I could do fifty miles an hour on a good road, and probably more. I was thirty-seven years of age. I had a wife,

a young sister, and two children, but they would be tolerably well provided for in the event of my death. My heart was sound and my general health good. (I repressed a smile as I thought of the minor ailments which seem of such importance in the humdrum times of peace.) I had fired with a Martini rifle in my youth, as a Volunteer. I possessed a revolver, and had potted at bottles in the garden, but did not profess to be anything of a shot. I was absolutely at the Colonel's disposal at any moment, night or day.

"One other point," added Colonel Gatehouse. "Are you quite familiar with this part of the country? I don't mean with the main roads; we all know those. Do you know your way about all the by-roads—even the lanes if necessary?"

"I think I may say that I do, sir. I have lived in this neighbourhood nearly all my life, and have known all the roads and lanes since boyhood."

"Excellent! I think you may be the very man we want. Of course, Mr. Wellingham, you are not the first gentleman to make us such an offer. In point of fact, we have been almost overwhelmed with such offers. But we have been compelled to decline 99 per cent. for various reasons that I need not go into. Some of you motoring people seem to imagine that the Army works only by daylight, and then on nice fine days. I warn you that most of your work will be by night, and the worse the weather the better it may be for our purpose."

"Very good, sir. I shall be ready."

I rose and moved towards the door. The Colonel, with a gesture, stopped me.

"Just a moment, Mr. Wellingham. As a civilian and a volunteer it is, perhaps, only fair that I should give you an inkling as to the kind of work you may be called upon to do. We are having a good deal of trouble with spies in this district—more trouble than the public realise. I speak in strict confidence, mind. I have been informed plainly by the War Office that this trouble must cease, and when Lord Kitchener says that, he means it—no more and no less.

"These spies, as you probably know, generally work by night; we must catch them, if we can, red-handed. I have told you this much because I want you to realise that you will be running a certain amount of risk. You should always have your revolver with you, and see that it is fully loaded and in good working order. Are you still willing to work with us, Mr. Wellingham?"

"Heart and soul, sir."

"Capital!" The colonel smiled for the first time since I had entered the room, and held out his hand. "I think I can depend on you. Sleep with one ear open for your telephone, and always have your car in readiness for instant use before you retire for the night. Don't stint the petrol. We shall square up with you for that. Good-morning."

II.

The excitement of Marion and Zoë, when they heard the result of my interview—or, at any rate, as much of it as I thought good for them to know—may be easily imagined. They glowed with pride, and my wife would certainly have decorated me with the Victoria Cross on the spot had she happened to have such a thing in the house. Zoë insisted that we should at once overhaul the car; she devoted herself with so much energy to polishing up the brass that I had not the heart to hint to her that the more we gleamed the more attention we should attract to ourselves. I don't think I have mentioned that Zoë is just seventeen, exceedingly pretty, and as madcap a little sister as ever any helpless man attempted to control.

"By the way," she observed, panting with the effort of vigorous lamp-polishing, "what would happen if, for some reason or other, you couldn't drive?"

"If I had too much to drink, you mean?"

"Don't be silly. You might have an accident or even be wounded. Who would drive the car?"

"I don't know. Perhaps the officer who was with me."

"What officer?" asked Zoë very quickly.

"I haven't the least idea. I presume there'll be some sort of an officer in charge of the party."

"But he might not be able to drive. I'll tell you what I think, Paul. I think you ought to have an assistant driver with you."

"To take up valuable space? Besides, I can't afford a chauffeur. You know that well enough."

Zoë became strangely silent. I am not a particularly brilliant person, but I have observed that a prolonged silence on the part of a member of the female sex is generally followed by a totally unexpected action. That happened in this case. Zoë disappeared after lunch, and I discovered, on hurrying into the garage, that she had gone off with the car. I was really very annoyed, because the people at the barracks might have rung up before she got back, and then I should have been found wanting at the very first call. I

wished that I had never taught the little wretch to drive.

She returned about tea-time with a bulky parcel.

"Where have you been?" I demanded.

"Shopping," said Zoë.

"Why didn't you ask me if you might have the car?"

"Because you would have said 'No'."

"So you commandeered it! I'm very angry with you!"

"In time of war," said Zoë, coolly, "one does things that one would not do in time of peace. I had to have the car and I had to have it at once. If I had asked for it we should have wasted at least an hour in argument, and then I should have got it all the same. I borrowed it for the good of my country."

"Perhaps you will condescend to explain yourself?"

"I would if it was for the good of my country, but it isn't. Forget that I ever had the old thing, and don't try to keep on looking cross, because it merely results in your looking comic. Pass the anchovy sandwiches, please."

All that night I lay awake, listening for the telephone-bell. Marion said that I slept soundly, but women do not understand these things. It was on the evening of the fourth day after my interview with Colonel Gatehouse that I experienced the thrill of being called upon to work for my King and my country.

We were at dinner, and Zoë answered the telephone. She came dancing back into the dining-room with flushed cheeks and eyes that seemed to have little lamps behind them.

"It's Lieutenant Malcolm, of Bennington Barracks! Such a ripping soldiery voice! He wants you, Paul! Hurry up!"

I went at once to the telephone. If Zoë thought I should run, however, she was greatly mistaken. I was there in a few rapid strides.

"Is that Mr. Wellingham?" drawled a rather languid voice.

("Isn't he a darling!" whispered Zoë at my elbow.)

"It is," I replied.

"Oh! I'm Lieutenant Malcolm, of Bennington Barracks. Look here, Mr. Wellingham, can you pick me up here about ten o'clock to-night?"

"Certainly."

"Good! You'd better bring a thick coat as we might be rather late. I'll look after the commissariat. Oh, by the way, you've got a shooter of some sort, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Better pop 'im in your pocket in case there's a bit of fun. All right, Mr. Wellingham. See you later."

The remainder of dinner was a farce. I should have been quite willing to eat composedly and for a considerable period, but Marion and Zoë—particularly the latter—jumped about and made such a fuss that at last I gave up the meal in despair, and went into the garage to get the car ready.

Knowing the importance that military men attach to punctuality, I decided to leave for Bennington at nine-thirty. Just as I was lacing up my boots, I heard the sound of a motor, and recognised it as my own engine. Remembering that I had left the door of the garage open—we live on a rather lonely road—I dashed out. The car was being driven from the garage with all the lights on, and I could distinguish a man in the uniform of a chauffeur sitting at the wheel.

"Stop!" I shouted. "Stop, or I fire!"

The car swung round to the front of the house and pulled up. The mysterious chauffeur, a smart-looking little lad about sixteen years of age, sprang down, clicked his heels together, and saluted.

"Who are you?" I demanded, thinking that he had possibly been sent from the barracks. "What are you doing with my car?"

"Come aboard, sir," replied the strange chauffeur in a treble voice.

It was Zoë, of course. I should have guessed it easily if my mind had not been occupied with more important matters. However, I collected my wits with extraordinary rapidity.

"This fooling," I said, "is very much out of place on such an occasion. If you think I was deceived for a second you were greatly mistaken."

For answer, she merely saluted again. I had to acknowledge to myself that she looked very trim and smart.

"And now," I continued, "you had better go into the house, take off that wig and those ridiculous clothes, and go to bed."

"I beg your pardon, sir," she replied, "but England this day expects that every man will do his duty."

"That does not concern naughty little girls. If you think I'm going to take you with me on this secret, and perhaps dangerous journey, you are very much mistaken."

Zoë sprang back into the driving-seat. The engine was still running.

"If you don't," she retorted, "I'll dash over to the barracks now, and say I've come in your place! I know the country almost as well as you do! Now, which is it to be?"

"Get out of that seat!"

"Not unless you promise to take me with you!"

"Get out of that seat! Do you hear me?"

"Yes." But she never budged an inch.

At this point my wife, who had come from the house unknown to me, must needs join in the argument. She said that Zoë had set her heart on being in it, and that if she herself had been a girl of that age she would have felt just the same. "Besides," she concluded, with truly feminine reasoning, "she looks so smart in her uniform!"

What could I do? The time was getting on, and Zoë would not budge from the driving-seat. Seeing, I suppose, that I was hesitating, they both redoubled their persuasions. There could be no danger with three men to protect her—two of them soldiers—and all the rest of it. Any man with womenfolk about him will easily understand. They have four hundred ways of getting anything they want, and they are quite prepared to try them all ten times over rather than give in.

"Oh, very well," I said at last, "but don't blame me if anything happens."

Then they must needs both hurl themselves at me and kiss me, so that it was nearly a quarter-to-ten before we finally pulled out and took the road to Bennington.

III.

Lieutenant Malcolm had given instructions that I was to be escorted to his quarters directly I arrived. Leaving Zoë in charge of the car, I followed the Lieutenant's servant, and was soon seated in a comfortable chair by a blazing fire, with a glass of something good at my elbow. Soldiers wisely believe in comfort, even in time of war. They have every right to take it when they can get it, poor fellows.

"Well," said Lieutenant Malcolm, "I'll tell you the nature of the little job we're on to-night. As you have probably heard, there are certain gentlemen of German persuasion who have been very busy cutting telegraph wires. One of them has lately come into this neighbourhood, and we have information as to his movements. He rides a motor-bike, and I have every reason to believe that we may catch him red-handed to-night, which is just what we want. Do you know a by-road running between Elwell and Oxley, Mr. Wellingham?"

"Perfectly."

"The main line crosses it, I think, about two miles south of Oxley?"

"That's quite correct. The road dips, and there is rather a high bridge just there."

"Exactly. Now, I'm banking on our young friend choosing that point for his operations. You see, the line is patrolled, but he can get to it by the by-road. I've given orders for the patrol to be drawn off the bridge between eleven and two. That will encourage him to get to work. I want to get there first, and take up a position with the car so that it can't be seen, but could dash out any moment and give chase. What sort of lamps have you got?"

"Electric."

"Good! We'll switch them off while we're waiting, and you can turn 'em on again if we have to pursue. I suppose you can overhaul a motor-bike?"

"I invariably do," I replied with some little pride.

"Good! Did you bring that pistol?"

"Yes."

"Have it handy. You never know. Now, then, we'll have a drink and be off. I see you've got a good coat. You'll want it this beastly night."

We walked across the parade-ground together. Zoë was sitting bolt upright in the seat next to the driver's. She sprang to the ground as we approached, and opened the door at the back of the car.

"Is that kid coming with us?" asked Lieutenant Malcolm in a low voice.

"If you have no objection."

"He's rather young for this sort of work. Can you rely on him?"

I was obliged to say that I could. The Lieutenant seemed a little doubtful, but he jumped into the back seat and was joined by a non-commissioned officer who had followed us up without my knowledge. I took the wheel, Zoë sat beside me, and we presently ran out of the lights of Bennington and took the Elwell Road.

I am not an emotional man, but I am bound to confess that a series of thrills ran through my somewhat stolid frame as we swept over the dark road almost without a sound. The Lieutenant and the Sergeant conversed in low tones at the back. Zoë said never a word, but I knew that her little form was strung up to concert-pitch. As for myself, I was glad to be on the King's business. Were there ten or fifty spies

instead of one I would do my share. The unwilling stay-at-home would show the sort of stuff he was made of.

A slight drizzle settled on the wind-screen and made it difficult to see the road.

"Will you have it down, sir?" asked Zoë.

"Yes," I replied, feeling rather proud, after all, of my headstrong little sister.

A mile this side of Elwell we were brought to a halt by a sentry, who appeared suddenly from the darkness and held up his hand. I pulled up at once and the Lieutenant called the man to the side of the car.

"Anything doing?"

"No, sir."

"Any other cars passed through lately?"

"No, sir—only a motor-bike."

"What was the number?"

"LZ15703."

"Did you stop it?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Received orders to let all motor-bikes pass, but to take the numbers."

"Quite correct. How many on it—one or two?"

"Two, sir."

"Were they going straight for Elwell?"

"Yes, sir. Doing about twenty-five."

"How long ago?"

"About five minutes."

"All right. Good-night, Corporal. Drive on, Mr. Wellingham."

As soon as we were clear of the patrol, the Lieutenant leant forward and said in my ear: "Those are our men. The number's a fake. We don't tell these youngsters too much. Gives 'em the jumps. Can you drive with your side-lamps only?"

"Certainly."

"Right! Put out the head-lamps after Elwell. Do about thirty miles an hour, but be very careful not to run into them or let them hear you coming. Go slow at the bends. We shall have to stop this side of the bridge. They'll put their lamps out, of course. Keep on top speed, if you can. They'll hear you if you change down."

Luckily, the road between Elwell and Oxley is pretty flat, and the surface very fair for a by-road. It was rather tricky driving, thirty miles an hour and no head-lamps, but I knew every inch of the road, and we were not likely to meet traffic. How I blessed the makers of my silent engine!

"How far are we from the railway bridge?" asked the Lieutenant.

"About two miles."

"Then look out."

I turned the next bend very cautiously, and there, sure enough, about a third of a mile along the road was a little red lamp, swiftly disappearing into the darkness.

"Steady!" said the Lieutenant. "Can you drive without any lamps at all?"

"Yes, but not fast."

"That doesn't matter. They can't get much ahead of us now. Stop a quarter-of-a-mile from the railway bridge."

Zoë switched off the remaining lamps, and we stole along through the almost utter blackness. I kept my eye on the side of the road, as one does when driving in a fog, and the others watched the little red lamp to make sure that we did not get too near. I reckoned that the noise of their own engine would drown the slight purr of ours.

"Steady!" said the Lieutenant again.

I pulled up dead. We could no longer see or hear the motor-bike.

"They must have reached the bridge. We'll leave the car here. Can you look after it, boy?"

"Yes, sir," replied Zoë.

"Very well. You'd better come forward with us, Wellingham. Have your revolver handy."

For two reasons, I could not very well object to this plan. The first was that I should have given away the secret of Zoë's identity. Secondly, if I had insisted on staying with the car, I should certainly have been suspected of funking the pistols of the spies. So I went forward with the other two, full of misgivings for my little sister. Never again, if we got out of this scrape, should she overcome my better judgment!

"Now, look here, boy," said the Lieutenant just as we were moving off, "keep your wits about you, and be ready to bring the car as far as the bridge the instant you hear my whistle. Better not turn on your lamps or one of them might get a pot at you."

We crept along, walking on the grass by the side of the narrow road. As we went, Lieutenant Malcolm sketched out his plans in a hurried whisper. He calculated that one of the spies would climb on to the line to cut the wires, leaving the other to guard the machine and keep a look-out generally. The Sergeant was therefore to remain below whilst the Lieutenant and I gained the line by a slight *détour*. When we had caught our man, the Sergeant would spring upon his accomplice and hold him until we had firmly secured the other. We would then pop both prisoners into the car and take them back in triumph to Bennington.

If, however, both men had ascended the railway embankment in order to work as much mischief as poss'ble, the Sergeant was to follow us cautiously and wait upon events. We were three to two, certainly, but we knew that the spies would not have the slightest hesitation in firing, whereas the Lieutenant's instructions were to secure the men alive if possible. It was hoped to extract from them valuable information.

The lieutenant and I climbed a gate and dropped into a meadow. Crossing this rapidly, we scaled the fence running alongside the line, and cautiously ascended the embankment. There was a telegraph pole quite near to the bridge. Drawing a little closer we detected a dark form climbing this pole by means of the foot-rests left for the convenience of the mechanics.

All depended on the next few moments. Higher and higher crawled that sinister figure, and nearer and nearer we drew to the foot of the pole. Suddenly the Lieutenant darted forward, his revolver pointed at the spy over our head, and shouted: "We've got you, my lad! Attempt to get your pistol, and I fire!"

The result of this sudden challenge was a surprise to both of us. Startled by this voice from the darkness, the spy released his grip of the pole and fell headlong. The full weight of his body descended on the Lieutenant, who went down under it and lay still. The spy went with him, but was quickly on his feet and whipped a revolver from his pocket. Before he could fire I flung myself at him, and seized both his wrists. He was a wiry fellow, very much younger than myself, but I had the advantage in weight. We wrestled thus for a moment or two; then he wrenched his right hand which still gripped the revolver free, and took a quick shot at me. The bullet whistled past my head, and before he could fire again I was on him, and had borne him to the ground.

My fourteen stone knocked most of the breath out of his wretched carcase, and he began to parley. He offered me his word of honour, in a guttural accent, not to make a bolt for it if I would let him get up; I promptly refused that. He then promised to throw away his revolver. I refused that also.

A train was approaching, and we were uncomfortably near the metals. I was meditating on the best manner of securing my prisoner, and wondering what the Sergeant was up to all this time, when the spy, who had been getting his breath back, gave a sudden convulsive movement which was intended to shoot me on to the line. I twigged his game in a moment, and it filled me with a mighty wrath. Leaving his left arm to do what damage it might for the moment, I gripped his revolver in both hands, wrenched it away from him, and flung it as far as I could into the night. I then staggered to my feet, lifting him with me. The train was close upon us, and I could now have hurled him under it as easily as possible. But the wretch shrieked for mercy, and I remembered the Lieutenant's instructions. So I contented myself with chucking my booty down the steep side of the embankment, trusting to the force of his descent to stun him and put him out of action for the time being. This it did.

I now turned my attention to Lieutenant Malcolm. He was still lying where he had fallen, and I did not know whether his neck was broken or whether he was merely stunned. I had slipped a small flask of brandy into my pocket before leaving home, and some of this I managed to get down his throat. To my intense relief he opened his eyes and then sat up.

He was a little dazed at first, and then, as he realised things, asked me what had become of the spies. I told him that mine was at the bottom of the embankment, and had better be secured before he came to himself. Of the second spy and the Sergeant I had heard or seen nothing.

After another little dose of brandy the Lieutenant declared that he felt as well as ever, so I gave him my arm down the embankment, and we bound the hands and feet of our captive with our pocket-handkerchiefs. We had just completed this task when we heard a shout from the Sergeant, some distance up the line, and then saw a figure running. Not knowing where the Sergeant was we did not like to fire, but we tried to intercept the fugitive. Seeing us coming he fired wildly, and then flung himself over the bridge and dropped into the roadway below. A second or two later we heard the *chuff-chuff* of his motor-bike.

The Lieutenant immediately blew his whistle, and Zoë was underneath the bridge with the car before we got there. I scrambled into the driving-seat, and the Lieutenant nipped on to the step.

"Drive like blazes" he ordered.

"Steady," said Zoë. "He won't get far."

"What d'you mean?" demanded the Lieutenant.

Before she could reply we heard a crash and a German oath. I slowed down at once

("KING'S WORK BY NIGHT" continued overleaf.)

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and the Lieutenant, shouting to me to turn on the lights, dashed up the road and secured his man before he had time to extricate himself from the machine. So now we had them both.

IV.

Our captives, securely bound, were placed at the back of the car in charge of the Sergeant. Lieutenant Malcolm sat next to me, and Zoe rode on the step.

The Sergeant's story was soon told. He had marked his man, according to orders. The second spy, not content with guarding the machine and keeping a look-out, had climbed the embankment and proceeded to another telegraph-pole a little way along the line. The Sergeant had followed, and sprung at his man just as he began to climb the pole. There had been a struggle and the fellow had escaped; it was then that we heard the Sergeant calling to us.

Arrived at Bennington, the prisoners were placed in the cells for the night, and the Lieutenant insisted that I should take some refreshment in his quarters.

"And," he added, "just bring your chauffeur in, will you? I want to ask him one or two questions."

I could not very well refuse, and Zoë did not seem to mind.

"Now, young fellow," said the Lieutenant, "I'm very pleased with the way you did your share of the work to-night. But you must just tell me two things, if you please. The first is, how did you know that that chap wouldn't get far on his motor-bike?"

"Because of his tyres, sir," replied Zoë.

"What was the matter with his tyres?"

"They were punctured, sir."

"Yes, apparently they were, but how did you know that?"

"Well, sir, I thought I might as well be doing something while I was waiting, so I nipped along and jabbed them with a pocket-knife."

"The devil you did!" exclaimed the Lieutenant, with a glance at me. "Then you disobeyed orders. However, as good came of it, we'll overlook that. Now for the second question. Why haven't you joined the Army?"

"Because I'm under age," was Zoë's prompt reply.

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen, sir."

Lieutenant Malcolm stared very hard at her. He was evidently puzzled, and every instant I expected that we should be found out. However, whatever his suspicions, he asked no more questions.

Zoë was so quiet on the way home that I offered her a penny for her thoughts.

"I'll tell you half of them," she said. "I was just thinking that all my life I've longed to be a boy. And now, just when I might be of some real use as a boy, I'm glad I'm a girl."

"Why?" I asked.

"Oh, that's the other half," said Zoë.

THE REJUVENATOR.

Friend, by your words I'm borne away
Far from the present scene
Back to the happy bygone day
When I was seventeen.
Life lay ahead and nought dreamt I
Of failure's overthrow;
The world was fair and hope ran high
Those thirty years ago.

The years between are lost to view
With all their pains and doubt,
Things that I never meant to do,
Resolves not carried out.
They flee away before the word
You negligently spoke,
For I was young when first I heard
Your so-called latest joke.

Theta.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Well Done Our Side!

THE ONE TOPIC.

THERE is little use attempting to touch on any topic save that of the War. On the whole, in spite of serious losses and great sufferings, we may lift up our hearts and realise that it has done more for the country and the Empire than any other occurrence in the whole of our history. Already one can hardly imagine the general attitude of stand-offishness which prevailed before war broke out. If the Fleet in Nelson's time was, in his fine words, "a band of brothers," so is the British Empire to-day.

In this spirit of brotherhood, may I ask you to

HAND ON THIS COPY OF THE *ROYAL*.

to a wounded soldier in hospital, to the reading-room of some portion of the New Army now in training, or to someone else who will appreciate it, giving preference to men in the Services and their dependents? It is not a great deal to do, but such a kindly action will afford considerable pleasure to the recipient of the magazine.

PORTRAITS OF BRAVE MEN.

Many a soldier left for the front so hastily that there was no time for him to be photographed in order to leave those near and dear to him a good picture. No doubt many of you possess small or amateur photos of friends and relations now fighting with the Allies which would be much more attractive if enlarged.

We are able to execute beautiful enlargements, executed in Indian ink and crayon, measuring 20 inches by 16 inches, for the nominal sum of 3s. 6d. each, post free. The general charge for such an enlargement is at least half a guinea. These portraits may be either head and shoulders or, if the sitter is in uniform, full length.

If you prefer it, we can supply enlargements in colour of sailors, soldiers, or territorials for the exceedingly small price of 5s 6d. The original will be returned with the enlargement.

What to Do.

Write your name and address plainly in ink on the back of the portrait you are sending. Pack it securely, together with a postal order for 3s. 6d. or 5s. 6d., according to whether crayon or coloured enlargement is required Then address the envelope (or parcel) to Dept. R., Messrs. C. A. Pearson Ltd., 18 Henrietta Street. London, W.C. Mark your envelope "Enlargement."

If ordering a coloured enlargement, state clearly colour of hair, eyes, and uniform.

Should the photo be of anyone other than a soldier or sailor, we will make the crayon enlargement for 4s. 3d. post free, and coloured one for 7s. post free.

Any number of enlargements can be made from one photograph, and we will make a reduction of threepence on each enlargement when the order is for two or more.

A MINIATURE FOR 1s. 6d.!

Both to the men who are fighting and to their dear ones left behind, really good miniatures of those from whom they are parted would be prized possessions. These can be supplied for the low price of 1s. 6d. Send us the photograph of which you require a miniature and state the colour of eyes and hair, inclosing a postal order for 1s. 6d., together with 2d. in stamps for postage. If rolled-gold mounts are required the price of the miniatures will be 2s. 10d. each. Be sure you write your name and address on the back of the photograph.

Should you prefer a pendant with a miniature on each side, send the two photographs of which you require miniatures and a postal order for 3s. 10d. Don't forget that in all cases *2d. in stamps must be inclosed for postage*, and your envelope addressed to Dept. R., Messrs. C. A. Pearson Ltd., 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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